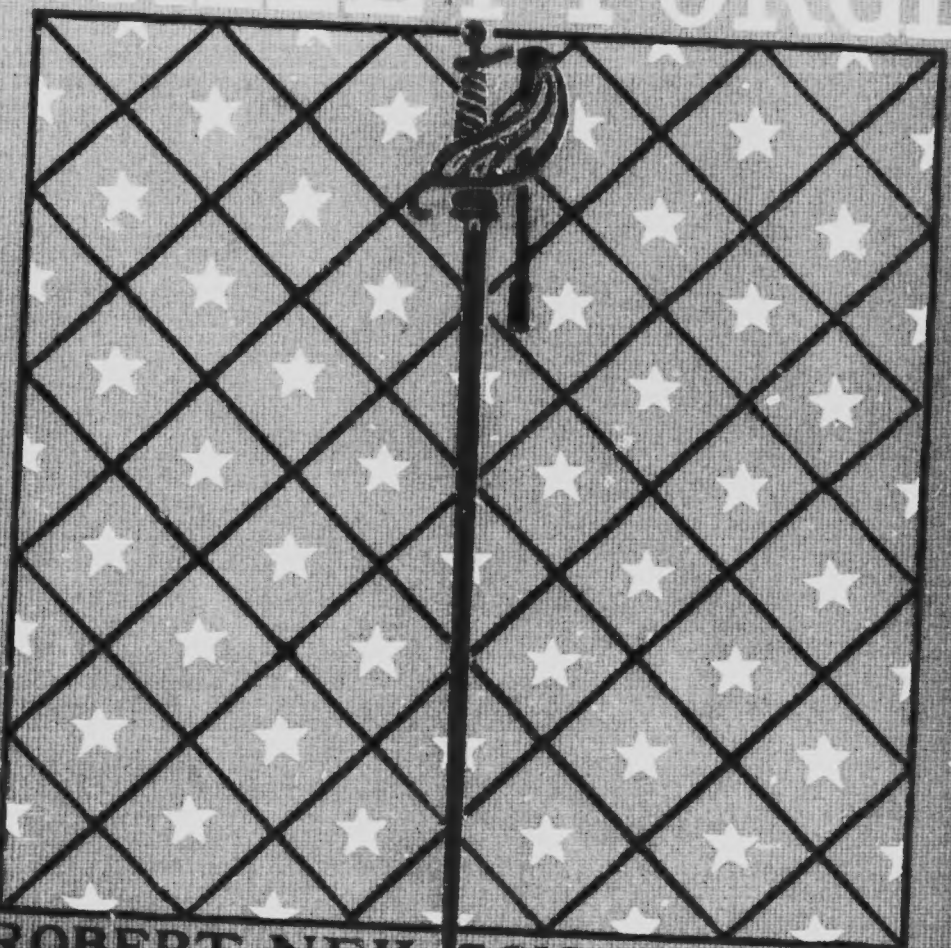
A SOLDIER OF VALLEY FORGE



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"He trembled, but stood motionless"

(See page 121)

From a painting by Frank T. Merrill

A SOLDIER OF VALLEY FORGE

A Romance of the American Revolution

By

ROBERT NEILSON STEPHENS

Author of "An Enemy to the King," "Philip Winwood," etc.

and

G. E. THEODORE ROBERTS

Author of "Hemming the Adventurer," "A Captain of Raleigh's," etc.

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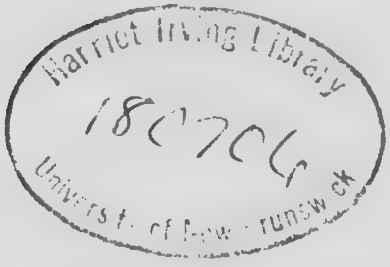
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A SOLDIER OF VALLEY FORGE

CHAPTER I

JOHN BRADFORD, TORY

Old Asa Wharton sat on a bench in the kitchen of his gray farm-house. The door stood open to the clear, renewing sunshine of mid-April. The patriarchal farmer was engaged in mending a trace that had broken, a few minutes before, and so interrupted his morning's plowing. His brown, hard fingers were busy with the leather, his mind with a greater matter. At a table near the chimney two women were preparing a baking of bread for the heated ovens. One was Prudence, mistress of the house and wife of Asa's only son, the Reverend Oliver Wharton The other was Susan, the only servant of the household. The women chatted as

they worked; for in the Massachusetts farm-house of 1775 the attitude of mistress to maid was friendly and unpretentious.

Asa's meditations and the women's chatter were interrupted by Mr. John Bradford. This gentleman, who was both physically and financially substantial, entered the kitchen from an inner room. He held his three-cornered hat and walking-cane in one hand, and several folded documents in the other. Though gray of head and somewhat too fleshy of face and figure, he carried his sixty years well.

"I must step out and conclude my business with Edward Wickham and Richard Harvey," he said; "and so to-morrow will bring our very pleasant stay under your roof to a close, Mrs. Wharton."

"We shall be sorry indeed, sir, to have you and Anne leave us," returned the dame. "Anne is like sunshine in the house and such a sweet, cheering companion for our Ruth."

Mr. Bradford bowed ponderously. Being a Tory and a Boston merchant, he had taken some pains, in recent years, to elaborate his manners.

Asa Wharton now sat with his hands idle in his lap and his keen though kindly glance upon his guest's face.

"I am sorry for what you have done, John," he

said. "An' maybe you'll regret it yourself, some day."

"You mean the selling of the land, Asa?"

"Yes, the selling of those two fine farms for less than half their real value — and every acre of 'em cut out of the forest by your grandfather an' your father."

Asa spoke with the heat of conviction; but it was a quiet heat.

Mr. Bradford smiled complacently. "My friend," he said, "though I get only half the value of the land — and, mind you, I do not admit to having driven so poor a bargain as that — I shall at least have it safe in my counting-house in Boston, in the shape of good English gold, when property in this vicinity shall be of no value at all."

"Why, John, whatever are you talking about?" inquired the other. "I was never much of a hand at readin' riddles; and it bests me to think what could happen — except another Noah's flood — that would make these good meadows an' corn-lands valueless. Wheaten bread an' corn-bread, pancakes, beef, wool an' mutton! — what's ever to happen, John, to rob such blessings of their value?"

"Answer the question for yourself, Asa, as you are well able to," returned Bradford. "When you and your neighbours, who talk rebellion in every

fence corner and at every turn of the road, have at last hatched that serpent's egg — why, then you'll have your answer! And you won't relish it, my friend! The land, no doubt, will still be of value — but of no value to its seditious owners. The arm of the English King is long, Asa, and the royal regiments are at the end of it — like a red fist."

The old man chuckled. "If that is what you think, John, you would surely run no risk in holding on to your farms. *You* are not among the seditious — you are a loyal subject of His Majesty — so why fear for the safety of your property?"

The merchant cleared his throat; but he was at a loss for a reply.

"Father is right, Mr. Bradford," said Prudence, drily. "Even if we rebellious country-folk should dare to rise and offend the King's Majesty, so staunch and well-known a Tory as you would not suffer either in person or property. General Gage would see to it that your property was protected, you may be sure. Otherwise, where would be the reward of your loyalty?"

"Very true. Very true!" returned Mr. Bradford; "but, for all that, I'll feel safer with the price of the lands in my own strong box in Boston, in undeniable, disaffected English guineas."

Asa nodded, his tanned face wrinkled in quiet mirth. "Maybe you're right, John," he said; "but, as you've done it, I'm sorry we couldn't take advantage of your sagacity. Here we be, three stalwart Whartons — Asa, the gran'dad, Oliver, the son, David, the gran'son — an' not the half-price of those two good farms, layin' north an' south 'longside our own meadows, in our combined pockets. 'Tis a pity, John, a pity! I like land — and, best of all, I like New England land. And I'd be glad to own some more of it at this very minute."

"And yet, Asa, your father was a richer man than mine," replied Bradford. "You have lived a long life, Asa; but you have not gathered any money together. I sometimes wonder what you have done with all those good years."

The old man's eyes twinkled. "I have wrought according to my lights, friend John," he answered; "and so I'll continue to do — while the lights last. You can cover every shilling of mine with a golden guinea, John; but where you have nought but those golden guineas to count over and over I have golden memories. Lord love us! d'you think I'd exchange *my* treasure for yours? No, indeed!"

"Hah — hum. Treasures of the mind," said the merchant, with pity in his voice. "Well, every man to his taste. Asa Wharton to his treasures of

the mind and John Bradford to his treasures of the mint."

Asa Wharton got to his feet and with flashing eyes and raised hand demanded the attention of his guest, his daughter-in-law and the servant.

"Carthagena! Louisburg! Quebec! Ticonderoga!" he cried. "Those names spell history, not property — an' Asa Wharton had a hand in the spelling. I have taken the word of command from Wolfe against the might of France, from Washington against the lying subtleties of the red man. Wolfe had an ugly little face; but I can see it now — a clear flame — as he rode down our lines on the plains of Abraham, before Quebec. 'Don't break the line, New Englanders,' said he. 'Back a pace. Dress by the centre. You'll be at 'em soon enough, my lads.' And his voice like a boy's, mind you; and his ugly little face flaming like an angel's. Hah! is that a memory to trade for gold? 'Back, New Englanders,' said he. And why? Because we were edging forward, to a man — straining towards the enemy. And Washington! He was a lieutenant of rangers when last I fought under him, though what he may be when next — but that can wait!"

Asa cooled suddenly, returned to his seat on the bench and took the broken leather in his hands

again. Prudence looked above the bread-board again, her cheeks aglow and her eyes shining. Even Susan showed signs of elation and awe. But Mr. Bradford was unstirred.

"Very fine, Asa," he said, consequentially. "Fine and heroic; but impossible. You have been a brave soldier and have fought under some great leaders; but they were British leaders, Asa. Even Washington was a British officer — then. So long as you fight under His Majesty's officers, old friend, you'll have victories to record; but should the mad folly of this country and these times lead you to take up arms *against* such commanders — why, God help you!"

He turned and bowed to Prudence. "I shall be back before dinner, Mrs. Wharton," he said. Then he placed his hat on his head and marched out of the kitchen, to hand over the title deeds of his farms to Wickham and Harvey, two men who believed in the value of the land.

John Bradford was not a happy man, in spite of his wealth and his loyalty to King George of England. He believed his friends the Whartons to be terribly rash and misguided in their attitude toward the sudden, burning question of the time; but in many things he envied Asa Wharton. Most of all he envied him his son. He, too, had a son; but

Lord! the difference between the Reverend Oliver Wharton and Barnabas Bradford! John had made a false step, at the very beginning of his career, by marrying a woman of no good qualities save an unusual, brazen kind of physical beauty. This woman had made John's life a nightmare to him for a few years, had presented him with the aforementioned Barnabas and had then run away to England with a youthful admirer. John had suffered shame — and relief; and he had made no effort to recover the woman. His London agent had kept him informed of her life and doings, however; and, at last, had notified him of her death — a disgraceful death. There had never been a happier widower than John Bradford. But he had not remained a widower for long, but had ventured upon matrimony again and this time without disaster. So, for five brief years he had been happy — and then fate had struck what had seemed to them the cruelest blow of all. His wife had died, suddenly, of a fever.

"I have had two wives," John had said, "the first a devil, the second an angel. This is enough of wiving for me, though I should live to be a hundred." So, upon recovering from the first bitter shock of his loss, he had turned his attention strictly to his children, and his business. He had now two

children, Barnabas, the offspring of the first union, and Anne, the offspring of the second.

This Barnabas was his mother over again, body and spirit. He began to disclose his real nature at an early age; but the father had shut his eyes to these disclosures, had hoped against hope, until that day of shame when Barnabas Bradford, son of John Bradford, was expelled from Harvard College — from the same college from which Asa Wharton's son Oliver had gone forth, about eight years before, with a distinguished degree and the respected love of teachers and fellow-students. Barnabas Bradford's case was an unusual one of its kind — a thing of utter disgrace. The whole of it was never made known to the public. John, in the first fury of his shame, had tried to administer a thrashing to the cause of it; but Master Barnabas had tripped him up very neatly, laid him flat on the floor with painful violence, and held the point of a knife against the paternal windpipe; and John, gazing up into the young man's eyes, had seen the eyes of the mother — the red shadow of hell-fire as he hoped never to see it again. And so, instead of receiving a thrashing, Barnabas had sailed for England and Europe, his pockets well lined.

After this, another change came over John Bradford. He left Anne almost entirely to the care of

her governess (who was an honest woman, fortunately), and applied all of his mind and what was left him of a heart to his business. It was as if all the pleasurable excitements of life had dwindled to the adding of guinea to guinea, house to house.

Sometimes he remembered to ask for his little daughter upon his return to the big, empty home after the day's work; but sometimes he forgot. Now and again his conscience pricked him and he played with the child for half an hour at a time, — bought toys for her and ordered new dresses and fal-de-lals. As the years passed, however, he suffered these prickings of the conscience less and less frequently. He had other things to prick him, Heaven knows! — and these things were the irregular and shameless reappearances of Barnabas. For Barnabas, with his money gone, always turned up like the proverbial bad shilling, came home like the proverbial cat; and until his pockets were filled again from the paternal coffers he remained in Boston, haunting the resorts of vice and flaunting his depravity in the faces of his father and his father's friends. Until he was shipped away again John Bradford's reputation — yes, and his life, even — hung by a thread; for Barnabas was as ready to twist a knife as to twist his lying tongue. He was absolutely, utterly vicious and dishonourable; and

yet his father had not the hardihood of spirit to hand him over to the authorities. Once again money would be paid; once again Barnabas would swear that this time was the last — with his tongue in his cheek as soon as the oath was given; and once again he would take ship for London.

A day came when John Bradford awoke to the amazing fact that little Anne was a young woman — and a decidedly charming young woman, at that. She was tall, graceful and more than pretty. Her manners were good; she could read in both French and English; she could play several classical selections on the harpsichord and the lute; she could sing, dance and do artistic needlework. In short, she was a young lady of whom any parent might well be proud — the equal of any proud, patched beauty in Boston — a fit mate for some stately Colonial Tory of the ruling class or some dashing officer of the Imperial army.

John Bradford was delighted — so delighted that, but for a vow that he had once taken, he would have led the governess to the altar out of sheer gratitude. So pleased was he that even Barnabas was forgotten — for a little while. Gold was John's god; but now, suddenly, his place of devotion harboured a goddess as well — and this was his daughter. But his pride in her was stronger than his

paternal love. He looked upon her as his greatest treasure, his highest-priced possession. Of course he loved her as his daughter, for he was human; but father-love was not the strongest emotion which she awakened in his heart.

John Bradford had distinguished himself in commerce and had acquired wealth; but of late years he had felt, now and then, a thirst for another, though kindred, branch of worldly distinction. When the realization of Anne's powers and charms came to him, this secondary ambition took definite shape in his mind. It was a desire to take as high a place in the social life of Boston as he had already won in the commercial life. This was a queer vanity to find in such a man as Bradford, for he possessed no social accomplishments that itched to be displayed, no thirst for merrymaking, no hunger for the companionship of scholars. He simply wanted to mix with the fashionably gay, the distinguished and the scholarly in their social life. He wanted the town — the state — to know of it — to see John Bradford a familiar guest in the houses of Winslow and Winthrop, of Ludlow and Bliss. He was a sound Tory; and now it was his ambition to become a fashionable Tory as well. He looked at Anne and understood that she must be his key to the doors of the exclusive.

John Bradford had started upon his social venture only about two years before the time of the opening of this story. Thanks greatly to Anne and slightly to his wealth, he had made admirable progress. He found the best of the fashionable, especially those of Colonial birth, simple in everything except their manner. These were delighted to know him, frankly charmed with Anne, and full of wonder that they had not seen more of John in the past. They pronounced him an estimable man — a good Bostonian; and that seemed to be qualification enough for them and theirs; but from people of less assured position, and from some of the English officers of the garrison, he met with snubs and rebuffs at first. Only at first, however. His presence at a party at Augustus Ludlow's and a State ball at Government House set him right with the waverers; and the gentlemen of the garrison took a second look at Anne, made a few more inquiries into John's business, and were pleased to be polite.

"Very likely he is quite as good as any other of these demmed Colonials," remarked an ensign of fusileers. The ensign's grandfather had begun his career as a sadler in Cheapside; and it was a curious coincidence that the father of the "demmed Colonial" in whose house this remark was made had always ridden leather of that sadler's stitching.

As John Bradford walked along in the April sunshine toward Richard Harvey's with his London-made cane in one hand and the deeds of his farms in the other, his mind dwelt, somewhat fretfully, on Anne. But for Anne's perverseness he might now be the father-in-law of a Winthrop — or, better still (in the eyes of the world outside of Boston), the father-in-law of Major Sir Goodwin Trigge, Baronet, 54th Regiment. Anne, however, had not considered his wishes in the matter — or the wishes of Mr. Winthrop or Sir Goodwin. Now John's hope of a distinguished match for her lay in the direction of Lieutenant George Temple. Temple was handsomer and merrier than the unsuccessful Winthrop, younger and slimmer than the rejected Major. He was brave, too, and honestly in love. All these qualities would weigh with Anne though they did not greatly impress John. But John was keen to capture Temple for a son-in-law because of his influential connections in England. Temple, who had been ill in the winter, had obtained leave to accompany Mr. Bradford and Anne into the country, and was even now at the village inn.

Bradford soon got through with his business. He then called at the inn for Temple, but was informed by the landlord that the lieutenant had left for Mr. Wharton's place some time ago. This inn-

keeper, William Pickard by name, was known throughout the countryside as a "dry stick." He was in some way related to the great John himself.

"The young gentleman seems to have taken an amazin' fancy to old Asa," he said. "Here he's been in my house a week; an' every day, twice or thrice atwixt sunup an' sundown, he must step over to the Wharton place. But maybe it's Oliver's Ruth he's got his eye on? What say you, Mr. Bradford?"

"Why, William, as you ask me, I must say you are more of a fool than I thought you," replied John, sternly. "Ruth, d'you say? Don't you know that Mr. Temple left Boston and came here in company with me and my daughter? And don't you know that my daughter and I are visiting the Whartons?"

"You call me a fool, sir," returned the innkeeper, mournfully. "If so, 'tis no fault of mine. It's in my poor mother's family — an' my mother an' yours were cousins, John! Well, good day to you, cousin. 'Twill be a fine step up in the world for you if Anne catches the lieutenant for a husband. But take a hint from me, John — get 'em spliced an' safe to England as quick as you can. The day is nigh when the wives of gentlemen like

Lieutenant Temple will be in danger of findin' themselves widows any minute."

John's face flamed. He stuttered. He pounded his cane on the doorstep of the inn. Then, without another word, he turned and strutted up the road, vowing furiously that he should never again visit a neighbourhood in which every Tom, Dick and Harry could claim kinship with him. It was too hard on his new dignities.

Mr. Bradford had fumed along for a hundred yards or so when he met with a fresh humiliation. A shrill whistle caused him to glance to the left. A lad of about fourteen years of age was grinning at him over the top rail of the fence.

"Hey, Mr Bradford! What did the red Injins do to yer cargo of tea?"

John halted. He would have been wiser to have passed on. He shook his cane at the boy.

"Impudent!" he exclaimed. "'Twas not my tea — nor my ship. But every pound of that tea'll be paid for yet — an' the tax, too! Remember that, you lawless young rascal."

"Who'll pay?"

"The rogues who hove it overboard into the harbour."

"Bah! Go home, you fat Tory — an' take this with you!"

A sun-baked lump of earth struck John's fine hat and knocked it forward over his eyes.

"That's for you!" cried the boy. "Here's another for King George!"

The second clod struck the merchant fairly between the shoulders.

CHAPTER II

THE WHARTON HOUSEHOLD

JOHN BRADFORD regained the Wharton homestead before the dinner-horn had blown. Asa was afield, plowing, having mended the broken trace. George Temple stood in the door-yard with Anne and Ruth, under the budding apple trees. His thin, dark face still showed some marks of his recent illness. He wore a long-skirted riding-coat that fitted his slim body, from the hips upward, and his straight shoulders, to a wish. The cloth of the coat was dark green. His waistcoat was buff, his breeches white, and he wore boots and spurs. His features were good, and clean-cut; but they struck one as being somewhat too delicate for the face of a man — more especially of a man of action. His eyes were large and dark, and pensive when his face was in repose. He had more the look of a scholar and a dreamer than an officer of grenadiers. Nothing about him suggested the pork-and-beef fed English soldier; and yet every drop of his blood was

English and he was a much better soldier than the majority of his comrades-in-arms.

John faced the three, his temper not improved by the sight of Ruth Wharton spoiling such an opportunity as this for the lieutenant to urge his suit.

"Things have come to a pretty pass in this seditious hole!" he exclaimed. "The place is a-reek with rebellion. A loyal subject — a King's man — cannot so much as walk the King's highway without meeting with insult. It is a shame! A crying disgrace."

"Why, father, what has happened?" asked Anne.

Temple smiled. "Lord! my dear sir, who gives a thought to a few lumps of mud?" he said. "Not I, you may swear. Let me brush off the back of your coat. That's better. That lad who throws his father's good land about is Peter Lunt. He has let fly at least an acre of it at me, since my arrival; but now we are very good friends. That, no doubt, is why he has now begun to honour you with his attentions. He must throw at some one, if only to keep his hand and eye in practice."

"But — but the indignity of it!" cried John. "First a lump on the head, knocking my hat into my eyes — then a great smack between the shoulders. Hell! Oh! you may laugh — but to me it does not seem a laughing matter."

"My dear sir, when lead begins to fly our way, instead of dry earth, then we'll have something to cry out about; and then it will be time to take steps in the matter," replied Temple.

"However that may be, sir, John Bradford, a native of this village and as loyal a subject of King George as any born in London, does not mean to wait here until the lead begins to fly," said the merchant, pompously. "To-morrow my daughter and I return to Boston."

"In that case," said Mr. Temple, with a swift glance toward Anne, "I think I, too, must return to Boston and duty. My health is quite restored by now, thanks to this fine air."

Anne did not meet the Englishman's glance but turned to her father.

"Must we go?" she asked. "There is really no danger. I am sure the trouble you are afraid of, father, exists only in your imagination."

"Please let Anne stay with us a little longer, Mr. Bradford," pleaded Ruth. "She needs the rest and quiet, after her gay winter in town."

"My dear young lady, it cannot be," answered John, not unkindly. "We have been well treated under your roof and have greatly enjoyed our visit; but there is that in the air that makes it politic for a man of my — ahem! — of my views in certain

matters, to withdraw speedily from this neighbourhood. I foresee a season of madness and disorder — brief, 'tis true, but exceeding bitter. To-day I was assaulted on the King's highway because I am known for a loyal subject. Of what might happen a few days hence, when the fever of revolt is more advanced, I tremble to think."

At that moment Susan appeared at the kitchen door and blew a deafening blast on a long tin horn.

"I must run in and see that the table is set. Will you honour us with your company at dinner, Lieutenant Temple?" said Ruth.

Temple bowed, smiling whimsically. "With pleasure, Miss Ruth — as I have every day of the past week," he replied.

"I am going with you," said Anne.

The two girls entered the house, leaving the merchant and the lieutenant alone under the apple trees.

"This is a bad business," said Bradford. "A devilish bad business! I tremble for our safety, lieutenant. The sooner we get safely back to the protection of the regiments the better."

"Twaddle!" returned the Englishman.

"Sir?"

"Ah — I beg pardon! But we are in no real danger. There's something brewing, of course; but I don't think it will amount to much. This is

a delightful spot — I have been happy here. I am sorry to have to leave it. Yes. Not so happy as I might be, of course — but still hopeful and happy."

"Ah! You are hopeful?"

"Yes, sir. I have not yet ventured to — to put the question; but I feel that my chance improves every day."

"Well, sir, you know that I wish you success. Anne is such a strange girl, however, that I am afraid to advise her," said Bradford.

Just then Asa Wharton appeared, from having stabled the horses. He greeted the Englishman pleasantly and respectfully. The two shook hands.

"You look better every day, lieutenant," said the old man. "We have fine air, sir."

"And you have fine dinners, sir," returned Temple.

"You'll always be welcome to our table, sir, whatever the food may be like," said Asa. Temple bowed. He liked this queer old farmer-soldier. It was a type he was not used to — a type unknown to rural England.

"Well spoken, Asa! Spoken like a Wharton," said Bradford. "Yet, old friend, judging by what I see and hear, you — you are not all that you sound."

"I am an honest man, John," replied Asa; "and I hope I sound like one. You, too, are an honest man — but surely you have lived long enough, John, to know that all honest men do not run to the same whistle."

"Quite right," said John. "Quite right."

"I sincerely hope that nothing may happen to make enemies of us, Mr. Wharton," said Temple.

"There'll be no private enmity between us, you may be sure," replied the farmer; "and, as I said before, I shall always be proud to share my dinner with you. But now I must go in and tidy myself, gentlemen."

The simple but bountiful dinner was served in the dining-parlour. Susan waited upon the diners, assisted occasionally by Ruth. The party consisted of the three honoured guests, Anne, John and the Englishman, of Asa, the Reverend Oliver and his wife, Ruth and her brother David. Ruth and Anne sat side by side. Anne was tall, with a slender but charming figure, luminous gray eyes and hair of the tint of pale copper. Her expression was gentle and yet vivacious and her features faultless. Her beauty was undeniable. Ruth, Oliver Wharton's only daughter, was small and dark; and, in a small, dark way, she was remarkably pretty. She was in delicate health. Her spirit, however, was robust

enough. David, her brother, was a strapping young man of about twenty-four years of age. His hair was light brown, like his mother's, his face brown and red with sun-tan and health. Every line and look of him suggested strength, honesty and intelligence. He was as tall, broad and large of bone as his reverend father, though not yet quite so heavily muscled. In height the three Whartons, Asa, Oliver and David stood within the half-inch of one another; but the youngest still lacked a little of the others' girth of chest. David had received good schooling in Boston, but had not followed his father's footsteps across the river to Harvard College. He did not aspire to the Ministry or the Law — and the family fortune did not allow of a college training simply as a genteel superfluity of accomplishments. David was destined to keep the homestead weather-tight and its broad acres in heart after Asa's reign was over.

John Bradford told of his undignified adventure of the morning. Mrs. Wharton was distressed.

"A sorry way to treat you, sir," she exclaimed; "and this the home of your fathers. It is a shame! Folks should not let their feelings about such a poor creature as German George get the better of their manners."

John Bradford's face lost its ruddiness. Speech-

less, he gazed in consternation from his hostess to Lieutenant Temple.

"My dear," expostulated Oliver, mildly, "you forget the young gentleman on your right."

"Yes, madam," said Temple, "you forget the terrible champion of King George's sacred name that sits at your right hand. How dare you, madam! Shall I arrest you, in the names of a slandered monarch and an outraged army? Nay — at least, not until you have finished serving me to a second helping of those dumplings. Beware, traitress! — and a trifle more of the juice, if you please."

Everybody laughed except John Bradford.

"Sir," he cried, "such conduct on your part is — is downright unseemly. You, sir — an officer of the Imperial army — to speak with such levity and disrespect of His Gracious Majesty! I am astounded!"

"But, my dear Mr. Bradford, I said nothing disrespectful. On the contrary, I stood nobly to my colours. I was firm, yet gentle. I even threatened to arrest the lady."

"That'll not go down with me, sir," returned Bradford. "You condoned with the naming of your sovereign for a creature and a German."

Temple shot a covert glance at Anne and saw

that she was not sharing her father's serious view of the conversation. "We are all cre[illegible]s," he said, with gravity. "Creatures of dust — of sin — of — well, ask the parson! But we are not all Germans."

"You distress me," said John, tartly.

"You must make allowances, John, for the lieutenant's wit an' upbringing," said Asa. "It's not every man could have turned my daughter's thoughtless remark so neatly and made us all laugh where some would have left us feeling awkward. It's a gift, John — a gift you are not blessed with. For my own part my former admiration of the lieutenant is increased; and I am ready to take oath on it that, when loyalty to your king is put to the test, none will be found of a finer loyalty than our honoured young friend. He and I, his and mine, may look on certain matters at different angles, but I'll trust him to stand by his colours as I trust the Whartons to stand by theirs."

The Englishman flushed with pleasure and bowed to Asa. A murmur of agreement went round the table.

"Of course!" snapped Mr. Bradford. "But I take exception to your way of stating it, Asa. You speak as if my loyalty to His Majesty were quite a different and inferior thing to Lieutenant Temple's

— even a different sort of sentiment to the Whartons' loyalty to the Whartons' misguided views."

"That is so!" said the old man. "The lieutenant is a soldier — and we are soldiers. Not *hired* soldiers, mind you, but born soldiers. You looked upon me as a farmer, John; but I did not beat my old musket into a pruning-hook, nor never will. Nor did my son Oliver turn his musket, that he carried under Abercrombie and Howe, into a quill — though you might suspicion he had from the weightiness of his sermons."

"Very fine! Very fine!" returned the merchant. "But what is a soldier, when you consider the question honestly? Why! nought but a fighting-machine! Food for powder! A defender or threatener (as the case may be) of commerce, hired by the real brain and sinew of the world — the merchant. A-hem!"

"A-hem, indeed," murmured Temple.

"Consider the subject broadly, impersonally," continued John, who had not caught the Englishman's aside. "Is the military life a noble one? Is it helpful to humanity? What say you, Oliver?"

"Do you wish me to speak as a soldier or a parson?" asked Oliver.

"As a minister of God."

"Very well. It is vanity, and worse. It is mur-

der on a gigantic scale. It is a thing of passion, unloveliness and false pride. It is a curse to civilization — a stumbling-block to progress. It is — it is — "

"Aye, so it is, lad," interrupted Asa, drily. "But now let us hear what you have to say about it as a *man* of God."

Oliver looked at his father, then scratched his nose reflectively. "Why, sir, as a man of God I repeat what I have already said — with a proviso to the effect that, so long as the Divine Wisdom continues to permit the existence of tyrants, then for just so long shall it continue to be every Christian's duty to do battle for his rights and for the rights of the oppressed."

"That seems just," said Temple, gravely. "Mistakes may be made as to what constitutes tyranny; but that is beside the argument. Will you now tell us, sir, what you think of soldiering — as a soldier."

The parson smiled at the lieutenant and shook his head. "I must refuse, sir, to be drawn into any such vain talk. Remember my cloth, sir, and spare me."

"I understand, sir," returned Temple. "No wonder you wish your military career forgotten. Soldiering is a cruel, ignoble, utterly despisable thing."

"Hold!" cried Oliver. "Not so fast, if you please! I cannot allow you to thrust such words into my mouth, sir. Some of the best men I know are soldiers. I have seen noble, glorious, inspiring deeds performed on the field of battle. I have seen unselfishness and tenderness displayed in the murk of powder-smoke. Never in the pulpit have I felt the nobility of manhood in the image of God so truly as I have felt it —"

But here he stopped suddenly and laughed.

"Is that what you wanted to hear, lieutenant?" he asked.

"Yes, it is what I wanted and expected to hear, Mr. Wharton," said Temple.

"You seem to have a way of getting what you want, young sir," remarked Asa.

"Then I hope my luck may hold," replied the Englishman, quietly.

At that, David glanced anxiously, covertly, at Anne; but the girl's eyes were lowered. He looked at Temple. He could not help liking and admiring the Englishman. Again he turned his gaze on Anne — and this time their eyes met. For a second or two their glances held. The colour deepened in the girl's cheeks and shone like sunrise on her white brow. Her eyes darkened, brightened, shone for an instant like Love's own piloting stars and then

were veiled by lowered lids. Only the grandfather, of all the company, had seen that tender, wonderful signalling. Young David sighed — a sigh of utter delight.

"Too much dumplin', Davy," said Asa. "Have a care, lad!"

David's laughter rang out, mighty, reckless, astonishing the diners. All save the old man and Anne gazed at him in amazement.

"Why, Davy, what's tickled you so suddenly?" asked Oliver. "Not a word out of you all dinner-time — and then, all of a sudden, a great hoot of laughter."

David blushed and looked foolish.

"He was laughing at his grandad's wit," said Asa, "which I consider very kind and seemly of him. So many youngsters, nowadays, believe themselves to be possessed of all the wit an' expect their grandads to do all the laughing."

Already twice the usual time had been devoted to the meal. In answer to a pleading glance from his daughter-in-law, old Asa pushed his chair back from the table.

"Davy and I must get back to the fields," he said. "Oliver, you will look after the lieutenant and John in your study. There's a great flask of Jamaica behind my own book-case, gentlemen, that the gov-

ernor himself can't match. It has been ten years in wood and another five in bottle. You will excuse us, gentlemen."

The good New England, mid-day dinner was over. The patriarch had dismissed the diners.

The Reverend Oliver led the Englishman and the merchant to the small room in which he wrote his sermons and in which all the books of the household were ranked upon shelves that ran entirely around the walls, broken only by the door and two windows. John was familiar with the room but not greatly interested in it. The chairs, tables and books were all shabby. The best thing in it, he maintained, was the family canteen — a collection of liquors gathered from here and there, at different times, by Asa and Oliver and sparingly partaken of by themselves, but always at the service of their guests. Temple had been in the room on two former occasions but had not yet had an opportunity to examine its contents closely — excepting, of course, the liquors. As a student of human nature he was intensely interested in this roomful of books in a New England farm-house. He had already made himself familiar with the contents of the kitchen and the dining-parlour. In the kitchen were the antlers of moose and caribou, the family powder-horns and bullet-pouches, a dragoon's sabre

of ancient pattern, a pair of snow-shoes that had belonged to a great Indian chief when Asa's father was a young man, a drum that had been beaten before Quebec and, most vital of all, Asa's old musket, Oliver's musket and David's long, woodsman's rifle, Asa's and Oliver's pieces were the same that they had carried in their campaigns. David's had never been aimed against a human mark; but it had answered for several bears and wildcats, had dropped a deer at a hundred paces and accomplished a great deal of clever shooting for the family cooking-pot and grill. In the dining-parlour hung the portrait, dark and obscure, of the former owner of the sabre. This gentleman had been a Wharton — and a cornet of horse in Cromwell's army.

Susan entered the study with three commodious glasses known as "rummers" and a jug of water. The Reverend Oliver produced the flagon of old rum and withdrew the cork. John Bradford stooped and sniffed at the neck of the vessel.

"Admirable," he said. "Asa was right. There is none better in New England."

The liquor was poured. The gentlemen raised each his rummer, bowed and sipped. Then Temple, with his glass in his hand, stepped over to the nearest wall and began to examine the backs of the books. He passed along the parson's shelves

swiftly, for they paraded the ponderous divines, the Greeks and the Latins; but presently he halted before a familiar title. It was "Earthworks." Next stood "Mining and Sapping," "A Guide to Military Supply," "Infantry Tactics" and "Company Drill."

"That is Davy's shelf," said the parson, who had been following the examination with discerning eyes.

"And he reads them?" inquired the other.

"From cover to cover; and he knows them, too, frontwards and backwards."

"Many of our commanding officers cannot say as much; and yet your son is a civilian. I should like to see him with a commission in the Imperial forces — in my own regiment. He would rise swiftly, if I am any judge of a man's abilities. And his commission could be arranged, sir, at slight expense to you. General Gage would recommend him strongly."

"It could not be, sir — above all at such a time as this," returned Oliver, quietly. "Things are in such a state in this country — and this is *our* country, despite our English ancestry. Davy's great-grandfather cut this home out of the wilderness. The cabin in which my father was born was loopholed like a fort. He fired his first musket through

one of those loopholes, — aye, and slew his first redskin. He was ten years old. You see, sir, we have fought hard for this country; and now, at this time of uncertainty and threatening storm, we can think of nothing else."

"I understand," returned the Englishman. "I am sorry for it — but I understand."

"Well, I don't!" exclaimed John Bradford. "Such a hubbub because of a tax or two! It is beyond my comprehension — beyond reason!"

"However that may be, gentlemen, we must trust to wiser heads than ours to quiet the hubbub. After all, we are but the hands. In the meantime, I notice that your glass is empty, Lieutenant Temple."

CHAPTER III

SOLOMON'S VISION

DAVID WHARTON spent the afternoon in repairing a brush-fence at the back of the farm. Much of the brush that had been cut and laid in place a year before had been crushed flat by the winter snows. These gaps had either to be filled by staking up the old material or by supplying new. Though David's heart was not in the work that afternoon, and though only a portion of his mind was upon it, he did not fumble or make any mistakes. Not as much as a stroke of his keen axe-blade was wasted or ill-considered. Where a weak spot could be mended with a new tree, and a young spruce or fir stood close at hand and in the right position, he took his measurements in a glance, cut half-way through the trunk on one side, drove the axe in to the eye at the opposite side and sent the tower of green sweeping down into the exact place where it was required. It looked easy enough — and it was easy for such a skilled axeman as David.

In this way rod after rod of the fence was set to rights. Economy of timber did not have to be considered in New England in 1775. There was enough and to spare on every farm in Massachusetts.

David worked swiftly and unerringly; but his thoughts were in the gray, wide-roofed house where Anne Bradford made a sunshine in-doors that matched the April brightness without. To-morrow that sunshine would be withdrawn! The gray, simple farm-house was to lose it, the grand house in Boston — nay, many grand houses and assembly rooms — were to receive it. The sunshine was to be withdrawn from him; but Temple was to continue in its tender and inspiring influence.

"That is as it should be," he said, sturdily. "She is town-bred, and fashionable, and a beauty. She is an heiress, too — and the toast of Boston, I'll take oath. She is not for any plain farmer, any man of homespun. Though her father is but a merchant, and a man of no scholarship or distinction of birth, yet she is like a princess and has been brought up like a princess. She must take an aristocrat for a husband — and if so, who more likely than Temple? He is kind and honest, as well as great and rich."

But he could not drive from his mind the memory

of her eyes as he had seen them a few hours before at the dinner-table; and neither could he satisfy himself with his reading of that intoxicating, bewildering glance. At first, and afterward for a few delirious minutes, he had believed that love — love for him — was what he had seen in those bright yet darkling orbs. But now, alone with his axe and the crowding forests and the wide field that were his only fortune, reason forced him to revise that reading. It could not possibly have been anything more than friendship! And perhaps not even that. It might be that she was thinking of someone else — of the Englishman — when he caught that look in her eyes. What else, in the name of Heaven! Why should a girl like that give a thought to a plain, hard-working farmer? — aye, to a clodhopper! Then, like a sudden hot flame, a yet more bitter idea flashed into his mind. Had she intended the Englishman to oversee that exchange of glances? Had she meant to stir him into activity? No, that could not be! She was honest. Her heart was as beautiful as her face. And yet the scorch of that thought remained with him.

"I wish to God I'd never seen her!" he whispered, bitterly. "I am a fool!"

It was six o'clock when David completed the

repairing of the fence. He filled and lit his pipe and sat for a while in dismal meditation. He was disturbed by a shrill whistle from the edge of the wood. Looking up, he beheld the familiar, pitiful figure of a young man of the neighbourhood named Solomon Brent. There had always been a Solomon in the Brent family, though there had never been a man of wisdom. The present possessor of the name was an undeniable half-wit. He was about nineteen years of age, halting of speech, lanky of limb and trunk, vacant of face. His colourless cheeks and stooped shoulders gave him the appearance of being weak physically as well as mentally; but in reality his long arms and shambling legs were endowed with tremendous strength. Also, on occasion, he could move with wonderful swiftness. Now he crossed the field and stood before David, his large, shapeless mouth lengthened in a foolish smile.

"Why, Sol, you look fine to-day," said David, glad of any diversion. "That cutlass on your hip makes you look the image of some old hero and the spruce bough in your hat —"

"That ain't spruce, Davy," returned Solomon. "It's a crest o' feathers — eagle's feathers. I am Gluskap, the God of the Algonquins. It makes a good game, Davy. Will you play it, too?"

"Not now. I've been working hard."

"Is your gun oiled an' loaded an' all ready, Davy?"

"Yes, it's ready, Sol. Why do you speak of it?"

"Because you'll be needin' it soon. There'll be a power o' shootin' goin' on afore long, Davy."

"Maybe you're right, lad; but what makes you think so?"

Solomon Brent glanced furtively around. Then he placed a long, thin hand on David's shoulder.

"I seen it," he whispered. "I seen it this very day — a picter of what's to come to us."

"How could you see it? What did you see?"

"'Twas down on our own bottom medder, this very day, just about noon-time. I was on that bit of a knoll to the west of the medder. The sunshine was very bright. It was crawlin' over the wet grass like a kinder clear smoke. An' then I seen it, Davy! There was five or six redcoat sodgers standin' together like a bunch of young steers in a snow-storm — kinder backin' into each other. They had fine belts on 'em, Davy, across their backs an' their fronts an' as white as Parson Wharton's bands on a Sunday mornin'. But two of 'em had lost their great hats. Up went their guns; but I didn't hear no bang, Davy. I seen a kinder ghost

of smoke — a shadder, like — an' then they started runnin' again. Well they run about twenty yards — an' then they run 'emselves clean into the air — to nothin'. Well, Davy, that dashed my spirits, for I was admirin' the picter. But in a jiffy there was more folks a-hikin' across the medder — an' they was four men just such as you an' me, Davy, tho' maybe not one of 'em was as big an' stalwart as us. They was hollerin', I know, tho' I couldn't hear 'em. There was an old man ahead, without no coat to his back, just as if he'd quit plowin' a minute before. He was loadin' his gun as he hiked along. An' in a jiffy they was clean out of the picter, too — an' that's all I seen, Davy."

David Wharton sprang excitedly to his feet.

"Then it has begun," he cried. "Somewhere — somehow — it has begun. The fight is on! We'll be at it ourselves in a few days. In serving my country I'll be able to forget the — the foolishness. Ah! Sol, now every man of us must stand firm for freedom. There is no drawing back now!"

"Ay, Davy, that's what I say," replied Solomon. "I'm all for freedom, by gum. I'll not stand by a king who chucks my tea into Boston Harbour."

"You've got that story hind-side before, Sol. But never mind. We are free-born men and not

a race of conquered slaves. We are Colonials; but, by the Lord! who won and made these Colonies? Did the King of England? — or the fat-headed, narrow-souled Islanders who've never seen anything of the world but their own villages? No! We — our fathers — won this country from the savages and the wild and held it against the French and the Canadians. We did it in the name of England and Liberty. We were Englishmen — the adventurous, the Empire-builders of the race! We left the cowards and sluggards behind us. And now they talk and act as if we were a race that had been conquered by their ancestors!"

"I guess that's so, Davy. Anyhow, I'm standin' firm with you, Davy. This here cutlass will make 'em wish they hadn't. I got a gun, too — a mighty fine weapon; but sometimes, somehow or other, the shot gets down the bar'l afore the powder — an' then she don't shoot. Reckon I'd ought to turn her 'round when that happens, an' fire from t'other end. How-some-ever, Davy, I'm glad you believe in the warnin' of my vision. I was afraid that maybe you hadn't sense enough, Davy."

"Yes, that is a kind of vision I believe in, Sol, for it was a real picture of something that was happening. I have read and heard of such things before, on both land and sea. It was what is called

a mirage. The sun does it — though I'm not sure just how."

"Ay, Davy, you're talkin' to a man who believes you. It was a mighty fine picter, anyhow."

"Well, I must be getting back to the house now," said David, shouldering his axe. "Milking is to be done yet, before supper. Will you come along and have supper with us, Sol?"

"I reckon not, Davy," replied Solomon. "There's that English officer who haunts your house all the time! He'll be to supper — an' I'm that fire-away in my temper, Davy, that maybe I'd do him some hurt, right there at your ma's supper-table. I'd mistake him for King George, like as not, an' without meanin' anything serious I'd out with this here cutlass — an' afore you could wink, Davy, or parson spout a prayer, there'd be the officer's head in a pie-dish an' your ma's table-linen all mussed!"

David laughed heartily. "In that case, Sol, perhaps you'd better not come to supper till to-morrow night," he said. "Temple is not a monster — and we'd all be sorry to see his head fly off. We all admire Lieutenant Temple, in spite of the colour of his coat."

"Not you, Davy."

"Yes, indeed. I like him. I only wish he had been born here, and then he'd be on our side of this affair."

"But he's after John Bradford's darter!"

"What of that, lad?"

"Just this, Davy. So are you! An' if I wasn't your friend, Davy, I'd be after her, too. Just say the word an' I'll slice his head off to-night, soon's it gets good an' dark."

"No, you wouldn't, Sol," returned David, sternly. "That is not the way soldiers do things. That is not the way Brents and Whartons fight. And you are talking foolishness in every particular. What do you know of Miss Bradford's affairs?"

"Just what I see in your face, Davy," replied Solomon Brent.

David returned to the house. "And yet Sol is reckoned to be less than half-witted," he reflected, in wonder.

Supper was quieter than dinner had been. There was something in the air — something at once restless and dispiriting — that told upon the company. Asa Wharton was preoccupied, answered several questions vaguely, turned his head frequently toward the door. John Bradford showed signs of fretfulness. Even Temple was quiet, glancing now

and then at Anne, but oftener losing his gaze in the heart of the candle flame before him. David tried to make conversation; but as he felt that politeness to guests demanded silence concerning Solomon's vision, his efforts were not very successful — for he could think only of Anne and of the mirage in which the half-wit had seen British soldiers retreating before the advance of armed farmers. The Reverend Oliver managed to talk well, if not inspiringly, of the weather and the condition of the live stock; but he was wondering, all the time, which of the men at that table would be the first to pass violently from this life to the next. He knew that the time of bloodshed was close at hand.

After supper, David went into the village. He found almost all the men and lads of the neighbourhood gathered at William Pickard's tavern, inside and out. They, too, felt the ominous lull, the tingling calm foreheralding the gathering storm. Vague rumours were in circulation. Dangerous passions were awaking. A very few of the men were drinking; and one, a big farmer from three miles beyond the crossroads, was indulging somewhat too freely in corn whiskey. He shouldered his way out of the house, glass in hand. He raised the glass high above his head.

"Boys," he cried, "here's luck to us an' damna-

tion everlastin' to them as would make us slaves! Here's to our bullets — an' may every one of 'em go through a redcoat!"

His toasts were received with cheers, and followed by good-natured laughter when the self-ordained toastmaster accidentally spilled his liquor over a neighbour's face instead of into his own mouth. David was well received by everyone, for his family was highly respected. Old Asa Wharton was the hero of the country-side. Oliver was as loved as a minister as he was as a man. David himself was popular with all who knew him. Great things were expected of David, and his knowledge of the science of soldiering was a boast of the village.

In the thick of the press before the inn David asked if they had heard what young Solomon Brent had seen that day. No one had heard it, so he told of Solomon's vision. It was received with cheers.

"It's an omen," shouted one. "We'll lick 'em clean out of their red coats."

"It is more than that," replied David; and he explained his theory of the mirage as well as he could. His words were confirmed by the schoolmaster, and by others who had heard or read of such things.

"Then if the fight's already begun it's time we

took a hand in it," said a young trapper who had come out of the wilderness to the settlements only a few weeks before. I'm ready, boys. Summer's my slack time, you know."

"Don't be in a hurry, Jim," said David. "We will get the word in a day or two I think; and then you'll find work ahead of you that will occupy more than your spare time. It'll be no one-summer business, you can take oath."

CHAPTER IV

THE ARRIVAL OF TWO DISTURBING FACTORS IN ONE DAY

THE five men sat late that night in the little book-lined study. David spoke of the excitement around the tavern. He told of Solomon Brent's vision; but he did not mention his argument with Jim Martin, the trapper. His hearers were deeply impressed with the story of the mirage. John Bradford made an effort, at first, to put the serious consideration of it aside with jeers. "A half-wit's dream — or lie," he said. The others shook their heads. Oliver drew several books from the shelves and soon found passages dealing with well-known examples of the mirage. He read them aloud. The merchant's sneer became apprehension.

"I hope, to heaven, the whole country is not up in arms!" he exclaimed. "Lord! who'd have thought this could ever be! We are in danger, lieutenant — in grave danger. I'll feel a weight off my heart when I see the spires of Boston again."

"It has been nothing more than a skirmish, I think," said Temple.

"You are safe under this roof, gentlemen," said Asa. "You are not threatened by savages, as our fathers were. And to-morrow, though you may find a deal of excitement on the road, I'll swear that you will meet with no injury. You will have Anne with you — and the company of a woman will be your safeguard."

"Yes," said Oliver. "You are safe to-night, and will be safe enough to-morrow."

"And once inside Boston our safety is assured," said John. "The danger will be the other way, then. My friends, I am sorry for you and I would to God I could make you see your madness! Ay, madness! Madness unspeakable — and laughable, too, but for the punishment that must follow."

"He laughs best who laughs last," returned Asa, quietly. "*We* have not yet laughed, John; but I notice that you have, more than once."

"It does not seem a condition of affairs for either side to laugh at," said Temple. "Whatever the cause of this trouble — whatever fine things may be said of it and high names given to it — blood will be shed, homes desolated. Englishman will destroy Englishman — for the spirit and blood of all of us is English."

Asa nodded. "I agree with you, sir; but a man's own child and health are dearer to him than the name and health of his great-grandfather. But it will be a sad time, a sad time. Well I know it, sir. I have been at death-grips with Injuns of twenty different nations, with Frenchmen, with Spaniards, with niggers an' with half-breeds; but never before have I sped the life of a man of my own tongue and mother-blood."

"Moralizing will do no good," said John. "Things are in a demmed bad way — an' we may as well be content with that until to-morrow."

Temple frowned at the man whom he hoped, before long, to make his father-in-law.

"Such sane and Christian discourse as Mr. Wharton's can do no harm and may do good," he said, sternly.

"Maybe so. Maybe so," returned John. "Heavens, I'm going to bed."

He wished them a good night and left the room.

"I could not sleep, even if I tried to," said Temple. "This is worse than the actual clash of arms — this ominous lull. It is like the calm before a hurricane, down about Barbadoes and St. Vincent. It's like the grinning silence of two great dogs, standing jowl to jowl and eye to eye before they flash their fangs."

"If you play chess, sir, and care for a game, I shall be delighted," suggested the parson.

"I should enjoy it immensely, sir," replied the Englishman. "We'll seek diversion in mimic battle."

So they got out the chess-table and the pieces and played three hard-fought games. Asa sat by the fire of green maple, for the April night was chilly, and saw many old deeds of valour acted again in the glowing coals and leaping flames. Now and again he moved his hands a little or blinked his eyes. Otherwise, he was as still as a carven image. David sat with his back to the candle by the light of which his father and the lieutenant played. He read intently in a small book bound in red leather. "Outposts are of the utmost importance when troops are operating in a hostile country. A cautious commander will make every provision to guard against sudden attack when bivouacked, no matter what the size of his force. In the case of a battalion of infantry the commanding officer would do well to" — and so on, and so on. This is the stuff with which David was trying to divert his mind — not from the electricity of imminent warfare in the air but from the thoughts of Anne Bradford. He was not entirely successful. Several times the sage advice of the renowned tactician to

the presumed commanding officer of a battalion was blurred by a vision of Anne's face.

The crawling minutes dragged an hour after them in to the past. Old Asa stooped forward, placed another stick on the fire and sank back in his chair again. David frowned, turned the pages of his book and placed his outposts — and every man of them had Anne's eyes.

"Mate, I think," said the Reverend Oliver.

"Mate, beyond a doubt, sir," replied the Englishman. "Do you care to give me another chance for satisfaction?"

"Delighted, sir, if you are not sleepy."

They began to place the pieces for the fourth game. Asa sat u suddenly and jerked his head toward the window.

"Hark!" he cautioned. Then, "D'ye hear that, a step outside on the grass?"

All looked toward the window indicated by Asa's glance, though the curtains were drawn across it. David closed his book and got to his feet; and at that moment there came the sound of tapping knuckles on the glass. David glanced quickly at his father and then advanced toward the window. He did not doubt that this was Jim Martin's game. Very likely Jim had fortified himself with more liquor and taken the war path.

"Be careful, lad," said Asa. "No knowin' what it may be. There's devilment in the air."

"Nothing dangerous, I'm sure," replied David, parting the curtains a little and staring at the black glass. He saw, indistinctly, the pale outline of a face opposite his own. The face drew nearer by a few inches until he could see the eyes, like black holes with a glint in them, and a line of mouth twisted in an unattractive smile.

"Who is there," he asked.

"A friend," came the voice, faint but distinct. "An old friend and a traveller. Let me in, David. Let me in at the door."

"I'll have your name first," replied David.

The face outside came still nearer to the window-pane. The lips seemed to touch the glass. They looked very thin and unpleasant.

"Barnabas Bradford," whispered the lips.

With an exclamation of dismay and disgust David turned towards the expectant room.

"It is Barnabas," he said. "Barnabas Bradford back again."

The Whartons were not ignorant of the ways of Barnabas. They had heard a great deal of him from John Bradford and something even from Anne — and rumour of some of his home visits had drifted over the country in common talk. Bos-

ton, in those days, was of just the right size for gossip.

"He must come in," said Asa.

"Yes. Let him in, Davy," said Oliver. "We must give him shelter for the sake of his family. I wonder if he knows that his father and Anne are here?"

"Undoubtedly, sir," returned David, "for this is the first time he has honoured us with a visit since he first left home, ten years ago."

He left the room, taking one of the candles with him.

"Who is Barnabas Bradford?" asked Temple.

"John Bradford's son, by his first wife — and an unscrupulous young man," returned Oliver.

"A rascal! But John's son, after all," said Asa. "I am sorry for John. This visit will upset him more than any political or national trouble. We must all make the best of it, however."

At that moment the unwelcome visitor entered the room, followed by David. David was scowling and looking awkward; but Barnabas Bradford was smiling and appeared to be perfectly at his ease. In one hand he held a fashionable hat, in the other a gold-knobbed tasselled riding-switch. His horseman's cloak, of fine cloth, was flung back to show its lining of red silk and his perfectly fitted coat

and yellow breeches. He wore boots and spurs. His hair was neatly tied and powdered. His complexion was as dark as Temple's; but his eyes were small, light and set close together. His nose had an ugly twist to the left. It had been broken in a drunken brawl in a Strand tavern. His brow was narrow, his mouth wide and thin. His features and expression expressed every kind of rascality save cowardice.

He advanced, bowing to Asa, to Oliver and to Lieutenant Temple. The three stood up.

"So you are back again, Barnabas," remarked Asa, drily.

"Yes, sir, the prodigal has returned — again, as you say," replied the polite rascal, smiling. "I trust I find you in good health, sir — and you, Oliver. But where is my fond parent hiding himself? I was told, in Boston, that he was here; so I came on at a post-boy's pace, left my nag at the tavern and finished the journey on foot."

"Your father retired to his bed some time ago," said Asa. "But sit down, sit down. Have you supped?"

"Thank you, sir, I have supped. I paused at the tavern for a bit." He looked brazenly at Temple. "But this gentleman? Have I had the honour?"

"It is Lieutenant Temple, of one of His Majesty's regiments," said Oliver. "Lieutenant, allow me. Mr. Barnabas Bradford."

All three bowed. Barnabas did not show the surprise and curiosity he felt in finding an English officer under the Whartons' roof. David left the room for a moment and returned with a clean glass. The visitor charged it to the brim with undiluted rum. He raised it, and glanced from face to face with a sinister smile.

"Your health, gentlemen, in the rare old stings! May valour flourish and virtue continue to be its own reward!"

"Ay, a very proper toast," said old Asa drily, and again turned his eyes to the fire. The parson, keeping his temper well in hand, suggested that Barnabas might wish to retire now. The visitor replied that he was in no great hurry to get to bed; he was accustomed to keeping late hours. "But what has kept you people up so late?" he asked. "The lieutenant's bad example? Or were you expecting me?"

"You are the last man in the world we expected to see to-night," returned Oliver.

"Well, Oliver, it is the unexpected that always happens in such times as these. Now to find Mr. Temple here, when the belief at the tavern

was that he had taken his horse from the stable, very quietly, and ridden for Boston several hours ago."

Temple flushed and stared unwinkingly at the speaker. "But you find me here, after all," he said coldly. "I ride for Boston to-morrow. I trust, Mr. Bradford, that my plans are agreeable to you."

"Lieutenant Temple is your father's friend — and ours. He is our guest. What is there unusual in that?" said Oliver.

"So that is the way the cat is about to jump," remarked Barnabas.

"Cat? What cat?" inquired Asa.

"'Tis but a figure of speech, Mr. Wharton," returned Barnabas leering. "'Tis the correctest, most up-to-date style of conversation, in London. What I mean to say is, this company is solid Tory. I can understand it of my dear father, of course — the strong side for him, always! But from what I heard from the patriots at the tavern I am surprised to find this family on the side of law and order."

"My dear sir," said Temple, "the best of friends may differ in their political beliefs. The Whartons are kind enough to accept me as a friend — in spite of my opinions on a certain question.

Being men of breeding, sir, we find no awkwardness or unpleasantness in the situation. But you, I see, find difficulty in understanding."

"Breeding, sir? I have learned to look for the fount of breeding in London — not in New England villages."

"Then it is a pity, sir, that you wasted your time so while in London."

"I fail to follow your argument, sir."

"It is a pity that you did not discover, and drink from the fount of which you speak."

"You mean to be offensive, Mr. Temple?"

"I trust, Mr. Bradford, that I have been too well taught to give offence unintentionally."

"Enough of this!" exclaimed Asa. "Lieutenant, I am old enough to be your grandfather. I request you to go no further with this argument. Be seated, sir, I beg of you. As for you, Barnabas Bradford, though your father is my friend of a lifetime, I tell you frankly that you have flung away your rights to consideration as your father's son. I am an old man; but, by — by all that's holy — I'll stop your tavern-tricks in this house!"

Barnabas Bradford decided swiftly upon his course, then laughed heartily.

"My dear Mr. Wharton, I had no intention of exciting your anger," he said. "I am sorry that you misunderstood me. Also, I am sorry that a nasty way of talking, with which I have been cursed from birth, should offend any friend of yours. I had not the slightest intention of being rude to Mr. Temple. I spoke with the tongue rather than with the mind. I hope he will be generous enough to forgive me."

Temple bowed but did not speak.

"And now," continued Barnabas, "I must go back to the room that I have ordered at William Pickard's. I have disturbed you sufficiently for one night. I shall be on hand early in the morning, you may be sure. Don't move, sir, I beg! I know my way to the door. Good night all, and pleasant dreams."

And so Barnabas Bradford left the house as unexpectedly as he had entered it and even more swiftly.

"I am sorry for John, sorry for John," murmured Asa, wagging his head. "But I'll go get a few winks of sleep, now. To-morrow'll be a busy day for all of us, I reckon."

Oliver retired also; but David and Temple sat up, talking and playing chess, until broad day. They were not disturbed. Jim Martin had evi-

dently reconsidered his threat and Barnabas Bradford gone quietly to rest at the inn.

It was about half-past five in the morning when Temple lay down on a couch in the study and David went out to feed the horses. David felt none the worse for his sleepless night; in fact, after a chilly bath at the trough behind the barn, he was as brisk as a cricket. He fed the four horses and the yearling colt and then walked down to the gate that opened on to the highway. He had no more than propped his elbows on the top bar when the thudding of hoofs on the soft road caught his ear. A horseman came into sight, riding loose-reined on a big sorrel. David vaulted the gate and dashed into the road.

"Hey! Hey!" he shouted. "What's the word? What's the news?"

The rider saw him and swung his mount to the right a little. He was a small man in a dingy hat and shabby coat. He came on without drawing rein.

"It's commenced," he cried. "Yesterday! Muster at Benton's Corner — musket, rations an' ammunition."

And now he was past, hammering loose-reined toward the village. David gazed after him for a moment, then vaulted the fence again and ran to

the house. He dashed for the front door, it being the nearest — and in the little porch he came face to face with Anne. He halted and stared at her.

"What is it?" she whispered; and he saw that her cheeks were colourless. "What did the horseman cry to you?"

"The word!" he replied, breathlessly. "The word to arm and muster!"

"To go to war — against the King's regiments?"

"Yes. It has to be — and — and I am glad, Anne — for one reason."

"Glad, Davy?"

"Yes. I am a fool, Anne! I — I have allowed myself to — to love you, Anne. Now the redcoats may bring me to my senses!"

She clutched the sleeve of his coat. The colour returned to her cheeks.

"And so — because of that — you call yourself a fool, Davy!" she said. "Is that — is that a sign of — of foolishness?"

"In my case. You know it is, Anne. I am a poor farmer — you — you are miles out of my reach! Do not make it harder for me — Let me go or — or I'll kiss you, Anne!"

She did not loosen her hold on his sleeve. He looked down at her in wonder.

"This is not a time for joking," he said, tenderly.

"Are you joking, Davy?" She looked up at him.

"Anne, Anne," he whispered, "that is the way you looked at me yesterday."

"How, Davy?"

"As if — as if you cared."

"And do you think I, too, am a fool — to care?"

"Anne! Do you mean —?" But at that moment old Asa appeared in the porch, from the hall. Anne darted past him into the house.

"What is it, Davy? What's the trouble?" cried the patriarch.

"Well, sir — Anne —"

"The man who galloped down the road? What did he tell you?"

"Oh, the horseman! We are to muster at Benton's Corner, sir, under arms. It has begun!"

His grandfather gasped with astonishment. Then his eyes twinkled.

"Well, Davy, you do certainly take it cool," he said.

"Yes," said a voice behind David's back. "Davy is just at the age, sir, when girls appear to be larger than thrones or nations."

It was Barnabas Bradford, dressed as on the

previous night and with his riding switch still in his hand. David turned with a grunt.

"Ah! So it is you, Barnabas," remarked Asa.

"Yes, sir. Bright and early, as I promised," replied the visitor, cheerfully. "Is my father up yet? And is he aware of my return to my native land?"

David turned and strode into the house, bewildered and dazed with happiness. And yet, at the core of his joy there was still a flaw of doubt. What had he said? Had she really told him that wonderful thing? He must find her and make sure!

In the porch Asa eyed the smiling Barnabas sternly.

"Oliver is telling your father," he said. "I had not the courage to administer the shock to my old friend."

"People soon recover from such shocks of joy," answered the other.

Asa trembled. For a moment it seemed as if he were about to strike the visitor; but he calmed himself quickly.

"I have my country's enemies to fight to-day," he said. "I have not the time to soil my hands on Barnabas Bradford."

He turned and entered the house, leaving Barna-

bas in the porch. He found David in the kitchen — and David had not yet found Anne.

"Come, Davy," he said, "this is no time to help get breakfast. Saddle Hero and go up the back road. Give the word to the Brents, the Gaynors and every house as far as the swamp. Your dad and I'll wait for you — an' your gun will be ready. Never mind the breakfast, lad. You'll have time for a snack when you've done your duty."

David stared at his grandfather for a moment, flushed crimson and hurried from the kitchen. Three minutes later he was galloping the big-boned Hero across the fields on a short cut to the back road. High was his mission and clear burned the flame of patriotism in his soul — but he thought only of Anne!

Back in the bright kitchen Asa was busy with the three muskets, the bullet-pouches and powder-horns. David's mother, in her efforts not to give way to tears, was laughing at nothing as she mixed the batter for the buckwheat cakes. Susan, the servant, was blubbering frankly and letting her tears fall, unheeded, upon the great griddle which she was greasing over the fire.

"Man an' woman, old and young, we must all do our duty," said Asa, oiling the hammer of his an-

cient but deadly musket. "Cheer up, Susan, or you'll drown the fire. Bless my soul, girl, you'll have us all back afore you can turn 'round, each luggin' a great British general on his back. I've captured a French general afore now — so why shouldn't I get holt of a British one?"

Prudence laughed with more violence than the speech seemed to warrant.

"And what are we to do with him, father, when you bring him in?" she asked.

"We'll make him help at the milkin'," replied Asa.

Just then John Bradford staggered into the kitchen, his great face white as his neckerchief, followed closely by Oliver and the two girls, Ruth and Anne.

"The chaise! The chaise!" he exclaimed. "I must be gone, old friend. The curse of my life is upon me again! Better to deal with him in my own house than here."

He swayed as he spoke. His daughter and Oliver supported him. Temple entered, his face flushed with suppressed anger.

"He has returned to the tavern for his horse," he said thickly. He already loathed this Barnabas — and the knowledge that he was Anne's half-brother burned in his heart like an insult.

"I hope to God he'll break his neck!" cried the merchant, with blue lips.

"My friend," expostulated Oliver, "my friend, do not forget that he is your son."

Ruth ran for liquor. Prudence and Susan, with awe in their faces, redoubled their efforts toward the preparation of breakfast. Asa stood his musket against the wall and went out to harness Bradford's horse. Temple hesitated for a moment, looked at Anne, touched one of her trembling hands swiftly and tenderly with his own, and then followed the old man to the stable.

Ruth returned with a glass of French brandy and held it to John Bradford's lips. He swallowed part of the liquor then brushed the glass away.

"You are a good child, Ruth," he said in a broken, unnatural voice. "And my daughter is a good child. But that heartless, sneering, black-browed devil's pawn! Is he my son? Is he of my blood — that monster? Nay, he is all that woman! My heart sickens at the sight of him. And now, friends, what think you he has come for? My money — my honour — my life? — nay, — this time he is all smiles and soft words — and the lies and subtleties of the devil. He is a rich man now — so he says; and he says he has come to take my daughter away with him — to see London!"

He concluded this speech with terrible laughter. Even the stalwart minister trembled at the sound. He had read of the laughter of the damned. This laughter of John Bradford's was surely it!

Twenty minutes later the chaise departed for Boston, John Bradford and his daughter inside, and Temple riding at the wheel. They were about two hundred yards from the farm-gate when Barnabas met them, riding a splendid bay mare. He had been thinking hard and swiftly in the past half-hour, and had decided to play a waiting game — for a time, at least. He put aside the monstrous, dastardly scheme that had brought him home. This young Englishman was worth watching — and this infantile rebellion was worth considering. Yes, the wisest thing was to smooth things over, hide his light under a bushel and watch Fate's play for a move or two. Maybe Fate would play a game that even he could not improve upon.

So he halted the chaise with a lifted arm, then rode close up to the right wheel. Leaning sidewise from the saddle he gazed, smiling, upon his father. John sat there like a thing without hope or life, his cheeks lined and colourless, his eyes dull, his heavy shoulders sagging.

"I am sorry to have shocked you so," said Bar-

nabas smoothly. "It was a cruel joke, I must admit; but a joke, nevertheless. In truth, I am a reformed man, sir — but as everyone seemed to expect me to behave disgracefully and cause you pain, as on so many previous occasions, I could not resist the temptation to give you a fright. I am sorry. I had not, nor have, the faintest intention of trying to take Anne away with me. 'Tis a mad idea, on the face of it! Come, sir, look more cheerful. I'll cost you nothing more than my bed and board for a few days and shall be the pink of propriety."

"What trick now?" asked his father.

"None at all, I assure you, sir. I mean to try to undo the wrong I have done you in the past."

"Words are cheap."

"True, sir; but did I ever give you soft words before? Did I ever before say that I meant to act honestly and kindly by you?"

"No."

"Then you must now give me a chance to prove what I say."

A faint tinge of colour returned to John's face.

"If you mean kindly toward both of us," said Anne, "will you do me a favour now?"

"With pleasure, little sister."

"Then come round to this side. Let me whisper a word to you."

He rode round to the other wheel, Temple eying him coldly the while. He leaned close to Anne.

"Take this back to David," she whispered, pressing a scrap of folded paper into his hand. "Be careful! It is a secret! Make some excuse for going back to the farm."

Barnabas straightened himself in his saddle and laughed good-naturedly.

"Why, little sister, I am not such a terribly heavy drinker as that!" he exclaimed; "but, as you ask it, and I am ready for any reform, I promise you to reduce my allowance to three glasses of port a day and a trifle of punch at night."

"Thank you, Barnabas," said Anne, faintly. His finished lying, even in her cause, shocked her.

"Drive on, sir," said Barnabas. "Mr. Temple, I'll overtake you in a very few minutes. I have a written message for the Whartons from one of their fellow-rebels. Their orders are to join a Captain Gibbon's company at Black's Mill, before noon. The man gave me the message to carry in such a matter-of-course way that I had not the heart to refuse."

And this, for a wonder, was the truth.

So Barnabas Bradford, with his messages of love and war, rode at a canter up the highway.

"Temple is the husband for Anne," he reflected — "at least from a doting brother's point of view. He does not like me; but I'll work round him. Wish I had suspected, last night, what I know this morning — that he is the only son of Sir Peter Temple, the richest man in Dorset. Once he's married to Anne I'll discover plenty of ways, if I watch him close, of getting my fingers on some of his money. Yes, that is my game — as far as I can see at present."

He opened the note for David and read: "Is it true, Dear? I can scarcely believe it. Indeed and indeed I care! Send me a letter to Boston — *soon*. Your Anne."

"This will not do," said Barnabas. "Master David, out of the cart you go!"

He tore the note into tiny fragments and scattered them as he rode.

"I'll give you her message by word of mouth, my high-browed David, much as it will pain my tender heart to do so," he said, grinning.

CHAPTER V

COLONEL GIBBON BLOCKS THE KING'S HIGHWAY AGAINST THE KING'S REGIMENTS

BARNABAS BRADFORD did not get from his saddle, but drew Captain Gibbon's letter from his pocket and handed it down to the Reverend Oliver. The minister, who was already belted and armed, his powder-horn on one side, his bullet-pouch on the other and his knapsack on his shoulders, opened the letter, read it and nodded his thanks to the messenger. Asa was grinding an axe nearby, Susan turning the stone for him. An axe, as the veteran was now, was a useful thing on a campaign in rural and wooded districts

"Are they joining us?" asked Oliver, drily, of the messenger.

"That's difficult to say," replied Barnabas. "Not at present, anyway. I have some business in Boston. But where is Davy?"

"Here he comes now," said the other, "flogging old Hero across the fields. He has been along the

back road with the word — and has not had his breakfast yet, poor lad."

Barnabas advanced from the farm-yard to meet David. Both drew rein as they came knee to knee.

"Ah! They've not started yet!" exclaimed David, with relief.

"You mean your grandfather and father?"

"No. Mr. Bradford and Anne."

"They have gone, Davy. They are several miles on the road to Boston, by now. I rode back with a message for you people from Captain Gibbon — and with a puzzling message for you, Davy, from Anne."

"For me? Puzzling?"

"It puzzles me, at least. I had no time to get her to explain it to me."

"The message, quick! For God's sake, what is it?"

"She said, 'Tell Davy that it was a joke, after all, and that I am sorry.'"

Young Wharton's face flamed, then darkened. His gray eyes seemed to change their colour. His big hands shook on the bridle. Then he laughed, harshly but guardedly.

"Sorry!" he cried. "Well, so am I — that she played it. But it was a mighty fine joke!"

"So it was only a joke, after all," said Barnabas.

"I am glad of that, Davy. I was afraid that it might be a woman's way of saying something serious. But I am glad to learn that Anne is not like the women I know. Well, I must warm leather. I promised to overtake them without loss of time."

David unsaddled and stabled Hero, dried the good beast's wet and muddy legs with straw and then strode into the house. He ate his breakfast in silence, his left hand clasped all the while in Ruth's thin little hands. Prudence ran in twice, during the meal, and pressed her lips briefly but passionately to his forehead.

"Well," said David, at last, pushing back his chair and squaring his shoulders, "I am going to take it out of those redcoats, by God!"

"Davy," exclaimed his sister. "That does not sound like you. I know you will do your duty — but not in that spirit and with oaths on your lips."

"I feel like a wildcat," he retorted, "and I'll work the feeling off on the enemies of my native land. Surely you have nothing to say against that, Ruth."

He laughed constrainedly, took her in his arms and kissed her tenderly and then went quickly from the room. Ten minutes later the brief farewells were said, and the three men marched away leaving the women alone in the gray house and desolate

sunshine, leaving a sermon half written, the plow in the furrow, a wonderful dream shattered.

From Black's Mill they pressed onward two hundred strong, headed by four fifers and two drummers. They overtook other companies and groups of stragglers; and, six miles beyond the mill they came to a brigade commander's headquarters. The brigadier was one Colonel Hooker, a substantial farmer who, in his younger days, had seen a good deal of fighting — of the kind now known as savage warfare. For three hours he had been dispatching gallopers, organizing the men who gathered in from all quarters, authorizing old officers and selecting new and pushing the rough-hewn battalions toward Boston and the issuing redcoats. He fretted to be at the front; but this was the work he had been ordered to do, so he did it with all his might. His headquarters consisted of a barn and a log hut. He dashed out to meet the new arrivals.

"It's a regiment," he cried. "By the Lord! a thumpin' big regiment! Who commands? Who is senior officer?"

Captain Gibbon, in half-uniform of a kind, with a rolled blanket on his back, a sword at his side and a duck-gun on his shoulder, advanced modestly, "ordered" the duck-gun and came to attention.

"I reckon I must be the man, sir. Been a cap-

tain, of one kind or another, these twenty years back. John Gibbon, sir, from up Black's Mill way," he said.

"Very good, captain. How many d'you stand?"

"Better'n six hundred, sir — and four hundred with muskets or shot-guns. T'others have pitch-forks, cutlasses an' axes, colonel."

"Tell your four hundred off into companies of eighty each — five companies. Strengthen each company with forty of the pitch-fork, cutlass men — and there you are! That's how we make armies to-day! How many officers have you?"

"Dang few, I reckon, colonel."

Hooker faced the regiment.

"Any of you who've been military officers of any kind whatsumever, in any kinder army or corps in any part o' the world, please take post in front o' the regiment — come up here by me," he bawled.

Nine men detached themselves from the untidy ranks, advanced, halted and saluted. All were past forty years of age. One must have been eighty at least. Two had been captains of Rangers, three had been lieutenants in divers militia companies and train-bands and the octogenarian had been a cornet of horse in England, sixty years ago. Two others had held the rank of ensign, somewhere, in something or other, and the ninth had, in his youth,

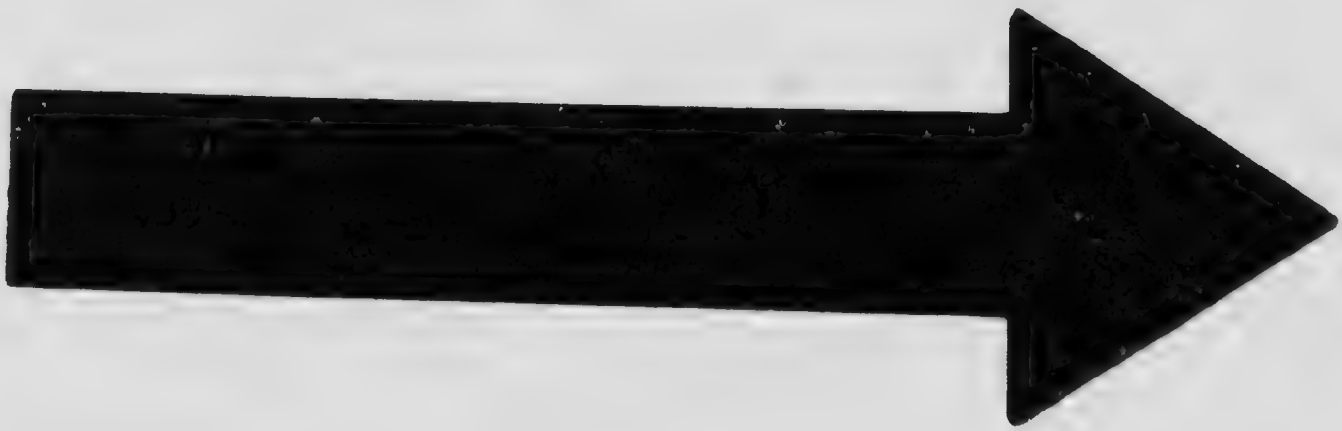
hunted the French on the high seas as a midshipman in an English frigate.

All were accepted joyfully by Colonel Hooker. To the fifty-year-old midshipman he said, "Sorry we haven't a fleet, sir; in the meantime you must take a half-company."

"Very good, sir," replied Mr. Warren, saluting. "I'll apply what I can remember of shore-drill and boarding tactics."

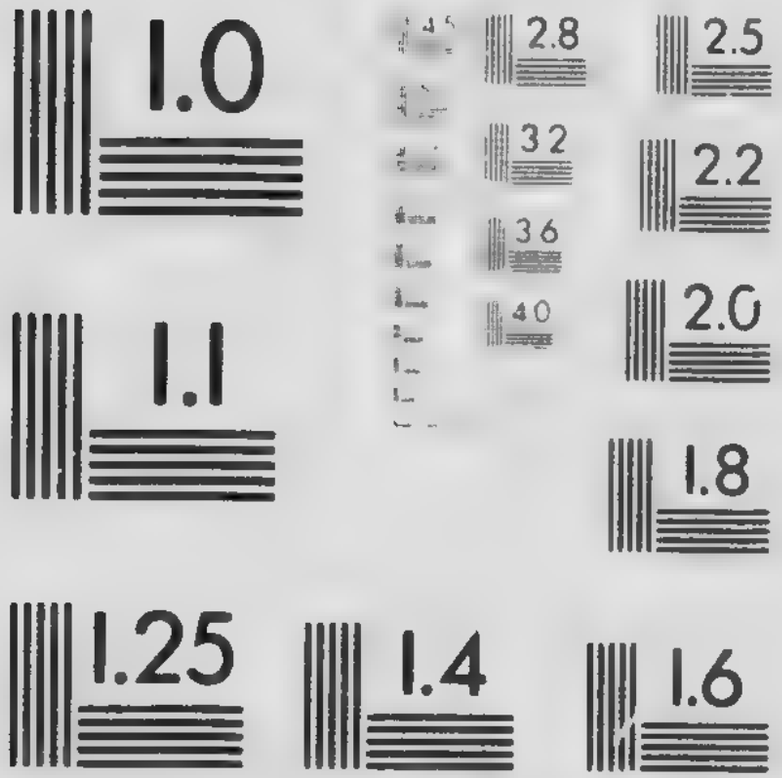
"Now, gentlemen," cried Colonel Hooker, "assist your commanding officer in telling off the five companies. Captain Gibbon ranks, from this minute, as a Lieutenant-Colonel — and the rank will be confirmed by the proper authorities as soon as possible. Captains Willis and Smith, you will act as majors. We have three lieutenants, a cornet and a senior ensign to command companies. Very good. The cornet will take seniority of all other company officers, with the rank of captain. Take notes of what I am saying, somebody. The remaining ensign, Mr. Van West, and Mr. Warren, late an officer of the Royal Navy, will take rank and command as senior lieutenants. Now we need three more lieutenants, five ensigns, a quartermaster and a chaplain. Colonel Gibbon, suggest some suitable persons to fill these appointments."

"Well, sir, there's a man who has done more



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fightin' than most of us put together, I reckon," replied Gibbon, pointing to Asa Wharton. "He was with Wolfe in Quebec, sir. His name is Asa Wharton."

"Good! Mr. Wharton, I can offer you the post of quartermaster or of lieutenant. I know of your career. You'll have your regiment within a month. Come, sir, what is your wish?"

"Why, sir, I can fight," replied Asa, advancing, "but I reckon I'm too old to begin officering now."

"Not at all, friend. You are needed on the flank now, not in the ranks. I haven't a sword for you; but I doubt not you'll pick one up in a day or two. Colonel Gibbon, Lieutenant Wharton will take a half-company."

The regiment cheered.

And so the brigadier continued, loud, alert, good-humoured and red of face. He appointed the Reverend Oliver Wharton as the new regiment's fighting-parson. After asking a few questions of David, he made him an ensign. The commissioned posts were filled; then he named a regimental sergeant-major and left the appointment of sergeants and corporals to the company's officers. While he inspected the arms of the new regiment his staff drew up a muster roll the while the men cooked and ate

their simple dinner. They were falling in, by companies, when a galloper came dashing up with word of several brisk engagements, the King's troops pressed back toward Boston on four roads but were marching sturdily along this highway, pestered by a few score of patriots but in nowise daunted.

Ten minutes later, Colonel Gibbon heeled his frisky colt in the middle of the road. He had purchased it, within the hour, from another patriot. He drew his sword. His voice rang out. His honest face flamed with great emotion.

"The regiment will advance. By the right. Quick — *March!*"

The six hundred stepped off, each company in fours. The majors, who had also acquired chargers, rode on the flanks, now to the front and now to the rear. After the colonel marched "A" company, with its eighty-year-old ex-cornet leading. On the flank of the "right" half-company marched Asa Wharton, on the flank of the "left" his grandson David. The twelve hundred feet stamped a soft but mighty murmur out of the brown earth. The sun glinted on the tines of sloped pitch-forks and glowed gold on the brown barrels of muskets, long rifles and ponderous fowling-pieces.

So for three miles they marched and then they were halted in a place where woods of spruce and

fir flanked the highway. Two scouts were sent forward from each company, in charge of a captain. The men were allowed to fall out, but were told to keep in touch with their section and squad commanders. The colonel dismounted and called the officers to him.

"Gentlemen," he said, "there are two battalions of the enemy marching toward us on this road. We've got to stop them an' run them back to Boston. On other roads they're already moving back. The difficult thing will be to stop them. Once we've stopped them, turned them and hammered them a bit it will be fairly easy to do the rest. Now, it's my thought that, if they're anywheres handy, this is the place to halt them. We have cover here — a chance to do some Injun fighting. What say you, gentlemen?"

The officers agreed with him. Lieutenant Warren remarked that two broadsides would sink the enemy if not given too much elevation. Asa had a suggestion to offer. Why not fell trees across the road and so force the redcoats to either climb over, take to the woods or turn back under a smart fire from cover? This suggestion was accepted. Twenty-five choppers were sent back a distance of a hundred yards or so, under David Wharton's command, to commence work on the barricade as

soon as something was known of the whereabouts of the two battalions.

The scouts returned, with word that the English were advancing in good order and not more than half a mile away, with a troop of dragoons skirmishing along the flanks and far out across the fields.

"To cover," commanded the colonel. "Companies A, C, and E to the right, in two ranks with fifty paces interval, front ranks facing road; rear ranks facing t'other way — for the dragoons, perhaps. Companies B and D to the left side, covering intervals between companies on the other side, taking position as mentioned. We don't want to shoot each other. Show markers on your flanks until all have taken position. Maintain silence. Hold your fire until I give you the signal on a drum."

The five companies scrambled into cover. David's twenty-five axes began to thud and ring. A great fir swept down from the left and crashed its crown to earth in the opposite thicket. A pine roared down from the other side. A maple, with widespread branches, fell in front of these and a ragged hemlock behind them. More spruces, more pines, more maples. Now the barricade was ten yards wide, as high as the wall of a house and fully twice

as long as the width of road. At a shrill whistle from David the axes ceased their barking and the axemen scrambled through the underbrush to join their companies. The colonel dismounted, called for a drummer to come to him, and then led his colt up the bank and into the woods.

At that moment the bands of the advancing battalions struck up their regimental march. It sounded very near — just beyond that wooded curve. The farmers could distinguish the booming of the big drum from the braying of the brass and the singing of the silver. The sound was wonderful, valorous, awakening.

"Darn my eyes, but that's fine," remarked a youth with a pitch-fork. "That be what I calls music, by gum!"

Far off to the right a bugle blew and was answered by a bugle on the left.

"The dragoons," said Colonel Gibbon to the senior major. "These woods run back quite a bit each way, don't they?"

"About two miles on this side an' clear to the river on the other," replied the major.

"Then *that's* all right," said the colonel.

Scouts of the advancing host appeared, walking singly. They slackened their pace as they neared the woods. They halted. A squad of six joined

them, then all advanced slowly. The band ceased its heroic music and the strong ominous thunder of the marching feet took its place. An advanced half-company came into sight. The scouts halted, turned and went back to meet the half-company. The ambushed farmers saw, though they could not hear, questions asked and answered. A young officer — a boy of about eighteen years of age — cried out an oath and advanced alone. A big sergeant ran after him and walked at his elbow. These two advanced, talking quietly, glancing anxiously from right to left.

"They are here, of course," said the ensign, suddenly and loudly.

"Yes, sir, of course," replied the sergeant.

"They are not such infernal, demmed fools as Sir Herbert thinks them."

"You be right, sir. There's many an old sodger amongst them rebels, sir."

The two continued to march forward steadily — an exhibition of cool, calculated bravery that awoke admiration in the hearts of the watching patriots. The advanced half-company now got under way again. The head of the column swung round the curve of the road, a glare of scarlet and white, a flare of yellow and gold, a glitter of steel. In front rode four officers on splendid chargers. After that

gorgeous head came the gorgeous body — the scarlet and the white, and over all the ice-blue glitter and twinkle of the bayonets. Again the bugles of the flanking dragoons called and answered from the fields. They were nearer now, — behind the edges of the woods, perhaps. The young, slim ensign and the big sergeant now came in sight of the vast and tangled barricade. They halted, spoke together for a moment and then turned. They began to retrace their steps as steadily as they had advanced. The scouts, seeing these two returning, halted. The column continued to swing towards the ambush.

Suddenly Colonel Gibbon stepped into the road in front of the ensign and the sergeant.

"Gentlemen, my compliments," he said. He glanced to right and left. "If any man fires upon these two before they join their regiment I'll hang him for mutiny," he cried. The ensign bowed to him. The sergeant saluted. Colonel Gibbon replied in kind and then stepped back to cover beside the trembling drummer. The underbrush was quiet. The sun beat hotly on the strip of road where the ensign and his companion walked shoulder to shoulder. They gained the edge of the wood. The boy removed his gold-laced hat and bowed to right and left.

"Thank you, gentlemen," he said.

Silence was his answer. The two joined the scouts — and at that moment the column halted. The ensign walked up to Sir Herbert Winter, the commanding officer.

"I have the honour to report an ambush of unknown strength, sir, and a remarkably difficult looking barricade across the road," he said.

"Thank you, Mr. Cameron," replied the baronet. Then he gave orders to the mounted officers near him. They turned and galloped back along the halted, flaring column. In the woods the farmers lay very still. Colonel Gibbon, standing beside the drummer, mopped his face with his handkerchief.

"Lord!" he breathed, "I wish they'd hurry up. Powder-smoke would sweeten the air, I reckon."

Bugles sounded from the British regiment and were answered by the bugles of the far-flung dragoons. The rear battalion left the road, half taking to the fields on the left and half to the rough pasture on the right. Colonel Gibbon could not see the act, but only the stir and disorder of it. He minimized the act. Beckoning to a young farmer who lay near, he whispered to him at length. The young man slipped away through the underbrush. The front battalion of redcoats moved forward again, their muskets held at the "ready," the long, trian-

gular bayonets glinting and gleaming from every muzzle. They reached the edge of the woods. Firing broke out to right and left. Bugles blew the "charge." Eight abreast, the English doubled along the ambushed road. Rank followed rank. The bugles changed their cry. The redcoats halted, formed line on the right and left, facing the silent, expectant ambush on both sides of the road. The firing on the flanks had slackened up for a moment. "Present," sang the bugles — and then, at a touch from Colonel Gibbon, the trembling drummer in the underbrush beat furiously upon his drum. At that signal, and before the King's troops could press trigger, lead and flame belched from the coverts with a terrific crash. The white smoke rolled out, lifted, clung in veils to the drooping branches of spruce and fir.

In spite of that first terrible, point-blank volley, the battle of Abner's Wood lasted a whole hour. From the shambles that had so lately been a peaceful highway the British dashed into the underbrush, advanced to the barricade, charged (in a few cases) through the gaps between the ambushed companies and so into the deep woods beyond. The flanking battalion, together with forty dismounted dragoons, also entered the woods. Here was "Injun fighting" indeed — and the Colonials were better versed

in this style of warfare than the Englishmen. But it lasted for an hour!

At the end of that violent, choking hour the broken and torn battalions of the King were in full retreat. They carried with them many of their wounded; but their dead, and not a few important prisoners, were left behind. Among the prisoners was Colonel Sir Herbert Winter. This courageous and indignant officer had spurred his horse up the bank and into the tangle of underbrush — yes, and into the very middle of the eighty-year-old ex-cornet's company. There he had fought furiously and well, despite the natural obstructions, until his sword broke across a musket and Lieutenant Asa Wharton dragged him from his saddle. His broken sword was returned to him by the old farmer. He refused it with a pitiful gesture of his left hand — his right arm was broken — and sat down behind the firing line. Among the dead was the brave young ensign who had marched so steadily through the ambush to the barricade and back again.

Five Colonials, mounted on captured horses, followed the retreating English half-way to Boston. Seeing that the redcoats were not likely to stop on the way — for every fence-jog seemed to hide a farmer bent upon hastening them townwards — they returned to their command. There was work

enough for them on and about the scene of the battle. Trenches, to receive the dead of both sides, were dug in the fields. The wounded had to be searched for among the trees, carried to the open and attended to. Fortunately, three belated doctors had joined the regiment during the engagement. Gallopers, with reports, were sent in every direction save that of Boston. Camp was made. An order was received from Colonel Hooker for Colonel Gibbon to remain in his present position until further orders. Word was received from galloping messengers that all the redcoats who had marched out that morning, with the exceptions of the dead and captured, were now back in Boston.

The following day was quiet. On the day after that, there being no sign of the enemy, five men from each company were relieved from military duty for three days, that they might sow their grain. These returned and three others were set free for the same length of time and purpose. After that, as the King's regiments continued to sit tight, half the men of the regiment were permitted to return to their homes and farm-work until such time as they should be ordered back to military duty. And so the empty fields were plowed and planted, after all.

Asa went back to the farm for three weeks; but

the chaplain and David remained with the regiment. David was already the colonel's right-hand man — and a lieutenant, to boot. His reading on all military subjects was standing him in good stead. It was he who organized the camp and perfected the organization of the companies — all this, of course, under the colonel's name and supervision. The quartermaster took two weeks' leave and David took his duties. As the old ex-cornet had met his death in that first engagement, his rank and command had fallen to Asa; but while Asa was on leave David was in command of the company. In fact, he was acting-adjutant, acting-quartermaster and acting-captain. He had not much time to devote to thoughts of Anne Bradford; but he sometimes dreamed of her.

CHAPTER VI

CAPTAIN BARNABAS BRADFORD

THE King's regiments were kept penned up in Boston, after Lexington and the few days of fighting which followed that historical event, for the greater part of a year. Colonel Gibbon's regiment had a long rest from actual warfare after that mad hour at Abner's Wood. At last the King's troops sailed away from Boston and north to Halifax, in Nova Scotia, taking with them many Colonial loyalists. But though the English sailed away from Boston in the spring they sailed back to New York in the summer, drove the patriots out and established themselves — but not without suffering considerable opposition, of course. A year later they hammered their way into Philadelphia. They had plenty to eat, plenty to drink, and seemed to think they had plenty of time. They certainly took things quietly, comfortably — a skirmish in the morning, a hand at cards in the afternoon, a dance and supper at night. It was very pleasant. The officers de-

veloped gout and the rank-and-file became plump and short of wind; and the loyal ladies and gentlemen had a gay time.

Needless to say, these were not the methods of warfare of Wolfe and other British generals under whom Asa Wharton and hundreds more of the Continentals had learned to fight.

So it came to pass that, in the winter of 1777, the Loyalists and British were enjoying high living and high jinks in Philadelphia and New York — and General Washington was holding his little army together at Valley Forge.

During the two years and eight months between this time and the day of the engagement at Abner's Wood much had happened to the chief characters of this history and their affairs. David Wharton had been wounded during an unimportant skirmish and had been nursed and petted at home throughout an idle July, had shaken hands with General Washington, had filled a staff appointment under Brigadier-General Hooker, and had gone back to his regiment as captain of " A " Company. Colonel Gibbon considered him his ablest officer. Both Asa and Oliver had spent much of their time on the farm, but both held by the regiment. Oliver was still chaplain; and Asa had accepted the appointment of quartermaster, combined

with that of musketry instructor. David, during all this time, had not seen Anne Bradford or received any message from her. He had heard of her, however, and of Captain Temple's continued devotion — from Barnabas Bradford. For Barnabas Bradford was now an officer of the American army of two years' standing and the rank of captain. It had taken Master Barnabas just six months to see the advantage to certain dark plans of his of throwing in his lot with the Continentals. He had been cordially accepted and presented with a commission; for the patriots considered it a feather in their cap to have won over the son of so robust a Tory as John Bradford, once of Boston and now of Philadelphia. Barnabas had walked circumspectly in his new duties and colours, displayed shrewdness and courage and won advancement.

Barnabas, as an officer of Washington's army, requires explanation. Surely the fleshpots of General Howe were more to his taste than the half-rations of the patriots! But Barnabas was willing to sacrifice the comforts of the moment to the luxuries of the future. It had not taken him long to learn that, ever if Temple should succeed in winning Anne for his wife, it would be by his own efforts and without the help of Barnabas. In other words, Barnabas saw that he could not influence his

half-sister by his present tactics of love and tenderness. Also he learned that Temple was a much stronger character than he had suspected and not at all free with his money. Try as he would, he could not get on terms of real friendship with the Englishman. He realized that Temple did not like him. When their glances met there was always a little, icy glitter of scorn in the Englishman's eyes. So Barnabas had reconsidered his plans; and, after six months of reconsidering and replanning, he had said a tender farewell to his father and sister, slipped out of Boston and offered his services to General Washington.

But with such propriety had he behaved during that half-year in his father's house that John regretted his departure more deeply than he would admit and even the girl missed his diverting table-talk a little. Though Barnabas joined the rebels — the half-clad, half-fed patriots who haunted the bleak woods and fields around the British strongholds — he did not throw himself into their cause with such absolute fervour as to lose sight and touch of other and more personal matters. No, indeed! In his simple uniform of blue and buff, his water-bleached boots and weather-stained cloak, riding hard, sleeping hard and eating poor fare, he was still the same old sixpence at heart — the bad

sixpence. The new plan took shape and clearness of outline, day by day, as he went about his duties among his ill-found, courageous men. As he wrote in his colonel's hut, or even in his general's, another point of the great plan would come clear and he would pause for a moment from his dutiful writing. He rode much and made many useful maps — many for General Washington and a few for himself. A day came when his matured plans and his duty joined hands. He rode into Philadelphia under a white flag and with an escort, to arrange an exchange of prisoners. Business done, he went to his father's house. John was not at home, but he saw Anne. She was to be one of the tools used in the working out of his rascally scheme.

Though Barnabas Bradford did not belong to Colonel Gibbon's regiment yet he and David Wharton met frequently. At Valley Forge they were housed within a stone's throw of each other. Both were captains; but, though David was so greatly the junior in age he was the senior in the service. Barnabas put himself to considerable pains to be polite, even friendly, with the Whartons. They met his advances half-way — that is to say, they were always polite. None of them believed that his new-found honesty was more than skin-deep; though the Reverend Oliver *said* he was satisfied

that Captain Bradford's change of heart was sincere. It was his duty, as a man of God, to try to accept the wolf at the value of his sheep's skin. Barnabas sometimes talked with David and more than once spoke of Anne. He mentioned her tenderly, but mournfully. Once he went so far as to say, "I ask no questions, Davy; but I think you once felt more than a friend's interest in Anne. You may still, for all I know. I want to say, Davy, that you would be my choice of a husband for Anne. I don't like Temple himself much better than I like his allegiance."

"I like Temple," Davy had replied, steadily. "He is not like the majority of those gentry. He seems to have a broader mind and a softer heart. Are he and Anne to marry?"

Not by so much as the flicker of an eye-lash did he show that he cared — and yet he still cared with his whole heart.

One day, in November, Captain Temple went out before breakfast to make a reconnaissance. Captain Bradford was afield at the same time and on the same duty. It had been cleverly arranged. In the gray dawn Temple posted his men in a little wood and ordered them to dismount. He went forward on foot and was soon lost to their view in a rough country. Captain Bradford, not far away, also

halted his men and advanced alone. Close to a broken hemlock stump — a noticeable landmark — he came face to face with the British officer. Both were crawling among the frozen fern.

"Ah! So it is you?" whispered Barnabas.

"Yes. Your terms are accepted — if it can be managed. Any information?"

"These. They are to be burned. You'll hear again within the month. No opportunity just now."

A small packet passed from Bradford's hand to Temple's.

"That is all, I think."

"Yes, all for the present."

"My men are afoot, captain."

"And mine mounted. So I'll retreat and you can make a show of following."

"Very good."

Temple turned and crawled away, his lips thin with scorn for the traitor behind him. Barnabas crouched silent and motionless for a few seconds, smiling, then blew a shrill whistle. His men soon appeared. He led them forward at the double. The handful of British broke from their cover and galloped away. A few harmless shots were fired. Captain Bradford marched back to Valley Forge and reported a brief encounter with a reconnais-

sance party of the enemy. Captain Temple rode back to town, spent an hour in memorizing the information received from Barnabas, burned the papers and then reported, at length and by word of mouth, to the general.

Barnabas was a rascal, already a traitor by intention, an unnatural son and a thief and liar; and yet he was possessed of both courage and energy. Having marched out on his own business so successfully, he planned to ride out on the business of the Continentals. He enjoyed the excitement of danger and the spice of outwitting his fellow-men. In developing and planning for his private enterprise he had acquired a great deal of information that could be used in other ways without injury to his schemes and to fill in the time of waiting with interest. Also, it tickled his devilish sort of pride and humour to rise, day by day, in the estimation of his superior officers. So, one night, he visited David Wharton in the latter's hut. Four other officers shared that poor hut of logs with Captain Wharton; but two of them were now on duty and two asleep in their straw-filled bunks. A fire of hemlock roots and green spruce crackled and roared on the rough hearth.

"Davy," said Barnabas, "I can't find enough work to keep me busy. Also, I feel the shortage

of food. What do you say to joining me in a little trip townwards, to-night, and helping ourselves to a few hundredweight of Sir William Howe's supplies?"

"Why, it sounds absolutely mad," said David.

"No, only wild," returned Barnabas. "Risky, of course, — but neither mad nor hopeless. I know that a wagon-train of dressed beef and flour is to be hauled in to-night from a schooner that has gone aground some miles from its destination. The schooner is breaking to pieces and Howe, with his usual clearness of mind, has ordered the cargo to be salvaged and brought in by land instead of by water."

"How did you learn this?"

"I spent yesterday and to-day down in that part, and on the coast, scouting in the disguise of a sort of long-shore loafer."

"Lord! You ran a tremendous risk!"

"Perhaps so," replied Barnabas, smiling lightly. He knew, however, that the risk had not been serious. That part of the country was considered to be quite safe from the raids of the half-starved, half-frozen patriots of Valley Forge and so was indifferently treated by the British pickets and patrols. There was nothing there for the rebels. Barnabas knew that, even had he blundered into suspicion and

arrest, he would have been in no danger of hanging for a spy. A word from Temple to the general! — he would have been set free in a minute.

"Well," he continued, "I heard the talk of the men who are to get the cargo out and I saw the schooner. Then I made a study of the road they are to haul on — and of another road and a trail or two. See, here is a rough map."

David took the sketch and studied it with interest.

"What is your plan?" he asked.

"Then you'll join me?"

"Yes, if it seems at all possible to carry it out and obtain some food."

Barnabas leaned forward and spoke rapidly, but in a low voice, for several minutes.

"Will the general allow us to risk the men?" asked David.

"We have not any time to lose in asking him," replied the other. "If we fail we'll call it reconnaissance, and if we succeed we'll not have to defend ourselves, you may be sure. Ten men are all we need. You pick five from your company and I'll take five from mine. I have the other things ready — and then twelve horses. The poor nags! We'll not do much galloping until we head for home. Bring your men to the big rock in fifteen minutes. We must warn the pickets we pass not to open

fire on us if they hear us returning in a hurry — perhaps with more horses than we started out with."

David selected five men from his company. The little party got away without mishap. There was snow on the ground, but the night was fairly mild and the sky clouded. Faint stars cast a fitful, half-radiance over the white fields, shadowed valleys and black woods. They rode slowly, for the horses were not in the pink of condition and so had to be saved for brisker work later. As they advanced, Captain Bradford explained his plan of action. Pickets and guards were passed without any trouble. Both Barnabas and David knew the country well; so, after a couple of hours' slow jogging the main road was left for a narrow trail. By midnight the little troop halted and the two officers dismounted and went forward on foot. Sounds of laughter, swearing and shouted orders reached the ten men standing motionless at their horses' heads. The captains returned in about twenty minutes.

"Just as I expected," said Barnabas. "A drunken sergeant is in charge of the work — and the drunken skipper of the schooner is assisting him. The officers are in town, of course, dancing and playing cards."

He took a bundle from his saddle-bow, unrolled

it and disclosed two cloaks that had belonged to British officers and two hats heavily braided with gold. These he and David donned. They mounted their nags, gave final instructions, and rode out of the cover.

"Leave most of the talking to me," whispered Barnabas. "I know the way they do it. Look slightly tipsy, if you can on our famous Valley Forge water, and swear haughtily if spoken to."

They reached the last great wagon just as it started from the beach for the road. It was dragged by four horses and loaded with sacks of flour and meal and carcasses of beef and mutton. Six men — the entire guard and their sergeant — sat on top of the load with the teamster and the intoxicated master of the schooner that had brought the supplies from the north. The four horses were big and well-fed; but they had to pull their hardest to get the load up the bank to the road. If the vehicle had been an ordinary country sled instead of an army transport wagon the task would have been much easier.

Barnabas Bradford rode forward and screamed an oath. Then, "Get off, you demmed lazy louts!" he shouted, "an' give the horses a chance. Hell's pit! what d'ye mean by it?"

The astonished men tumbled off the load and

lay hold of the snow-clogged wheels. The teamster cracked his whip and the wagon reached the top of the bank. The two Continentals rode after it, Barnabas still swearing furiously. Both saw that the muskets of the guard were on the wagon.

So, for half a mile, they trundled forward. Then Barnabas called a halt, so that the horses might recover their wind and he swore at the guard and the sergeant more effectively — and for another reason. At this point the road branched. Suddenly, silently, out of the woods slipped ten men. Only three of the British had time to shout; but shouting counted for nothing that night. Then one of the Continentals took the place of the former teamster, the horses were brought from the woods and all mounted. The wagon rolled forward and turned into the narrower, less-used branch of the road. Five of the men, under David's command, passed it and rode ahead. Barnabas kept to the rear with his little squad. The English guard, gagged in their own great-coats and bound with their own belts, were left in the underbrush beside the road. David, riding ahead of his men, was challenged twice — to the misfortune of the challenger.

After three hours of hard work on the part of

the wagon-horses, half the journey was accomplished. In that time two short cuts had been made through the woods on tracks of the roughest description. On these occasions David and his men had gone back to help push and drag the wagon through. Now, with half of their journey done, they were safe from attack in front. They rested for half an hour, then pressed forward again, all keeping close to the precious load. David held out his hand to Barnabas.

"I sincerely congratulate you," he said. "It was a fine bit of work."

Barnabas clasped his hand. "There was really very little risk, after all," he replied, modestly. Then, with a low reflective chuckle, "I expect to go through with more dangerous games than this proved to be, before this trouble is ended," he added.

"Then I hope your luck will hold," said David, cordially, "and if you think I can help you, just call on me."

Barnabas thanked him, smiling. "If the young fool understood what I am talking about," he thought, "I believe he would leap on me and break my neck without a moment's hesitation."

"Hark!" exclaimed one of the men. "What's that noise?"

They halted; and for a little while nothing was heard except the blowing of the weary horses.

Then David spoke.

"I hear it. Yes — hark to that."

"Galloping horses — far away."

"Not so far. The snow deadens it."

"We had better push on," said Barnabas. "If what we hear happens to be a mounted party of the enemy on our trail we'll know quite soon enough."

They accomplished another mile; and by then the sounds of pursuit were unmistakable. The wagon continued to roll ponderously and slowly along, followed by two horsemen. The ten others turned and rode back a distance of about a hundred yards. Here David and four men pressed their way into the woods. Captain Bradford and his four went on toward the enemy for another hundred yards or thereabouts and also entered the woods.

Twenty Hessians spurred their winded horses along the rough track. The horses were fagged, the men tired, twig-torn and disheartened by the hour, the snow and the unfamiliar country. They cursed freely. Their mounts kicked, stumbled, almost lay down in the snow. They would have given up the chase an hour ago, but for the English lieutenant who rode in front with their own officer.

By now, however, even the oaths and taunts of the Englishman could not turn the Hessian captain from his determination to retire. He shouted a command and the twenty hussars halted and dismounted.

"Another mile!" screamed the Englishman. "One more mile and we have them. By ——! captain, don't you know your duty? Are you content to be beaten by a handful of half-starved, half-armed colonial farmers?"

"Very gontent, Herr Danby," replied the captain, who did not speak English fluently. "Dem gontent, mine frien'. Absolute!"

"But there is no danger," stormed the Englishman. "All we have to do is overtake them. They'll run into the woods like hares."

"Herr Lieutenant," returned the Hessian captain, "me an' mine prave poys, we loffs danger. We eats him. Me? — I liffs on smoke and plood."

He gave a command and swung into his saddle. His men scrambled into theirs. All pulled their horses round for home.

"Slow, mine prave poys. No hurry-up," cautioned the captain; but at that moment four muskets and two pistols bellowed in the underbrush. With a yell of dismay the twenty hussars dug in their spurs and, with their captain in the van, went

down the road at a mad gallop. Behind rode the Englishman, screaming curses at them; begging them to halt and fight; threatening to shoot them. Another volley rang from the woods behind — David's contribution to the Hessian stampede.

The sun was red along the hilltops in the east when the loaded wagon and its escort crawled into the camp at Valley Forge. The twelve heroes of the raid were received with ringing cheers.

CHAPTER VII

AMONG THE FLESHPOTS OF PHILADELPHIA

ANNE BRADFORD had her habitation in Philadelphia with her father. She had made the voyage to Halifax two years before, at the time of the English evacuation of Boston; but later she had followed the fortunes of her loyal father and the British forces back to New York and, later still, to Philadelphia. During all these shiftings Temple had not lost sight of her for more than a few weeks at a time. He was still the gentle, hopeful, determined suitor for her hand; but he was not her only admirer among the British officers. Even in his own regiment he had three rivals. Though not the only one, he was the most graciously received by all. Anne liked him, admired him and valued his friendship highly; but her love burned unwavering before the memory, and the hope, of David. She wondered that David had not managed to communicate with her, in some way, in reply to that note of hers of nearly three years ago. She won-

dered and grieved, but she trusted. Perhaps his communications had miscarried. What more likely? So she prayed for him every night and morning, kept her dreams and longings secret and showed a brave face to her father and the gay world that shut her in from her lover. And so it had been for close upon three years, amid changes, travels and the glitter and music of a pleasure-chasing, arrogant military and Tory society.

About a month after the night of the audacious capture of the royal provision-wagon while General Washington continued to hold his ragged army together at Valley Forge and General Sir William Howe continued to wait for that army to starve to death and so peacefully return to its original elements, a great dinner-party was going forward in Sir William's house in Philadelphia. Four o'clock was an extremely fashionable dinner hour; but the British general-in-chief had improved on the fashion, and caused a great stir among the ladies, by naming five o'clock as the hour for this dinner. Some conservative dames criticised this innovation severely — among themselves, of course; but when the new, outrageous hour struck, and the announcement was made by the general's butler that dinner was served, every guest was found to be present. The company was a distinguished one.

Here were the officers of the army, of various ranks, who stood high in Sir William's good books at the moment. As many officers had sent home for their wives and daughters to join them in the rigour of a Philadelphia campaign, some of these ladies were of the company. But a third of the company was made up of loyal Colonials and the women-folk. The Bradfords were present; but it is an undeniable fact that John was the least distinguished person at table. The other Loyalists were all his superiors by birth, by achievement — by everything but wealth. Here were gentlemen who fought actively for the cause in which they believed, who raised and commanded regiments in that cause, and who later moulded the fine beginnings of the northern British provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Ontario. They were strong men who gave their lives and their money to what they considered a just cause — the unity of the British Empire. Losing in their old homes, they and their families carved out a new empire for the Crown in the wilderness to the north. They were not men of John Bradford's stamp exactly. They and their loyalty differed from him and his loyalty. They stood by traditions — John by his money-bags. Eventually John died in Boston, with his property intact, the while these loyalists of an-

other and finer quality built new homes and empires in the north, stood to their original colours and left their names in history. All this, however, lies beyond my story. John Bradford was an honoured guest at General Howe's dinner-table even if his name is not now to be found in history; and what the shrewd and anxious merchant lacked in distinction his beautiful daughter more than made up.

The room was warm, and, as was the custom of the time, the table was actually loaded with a variety of rich dishes. Anne, seated between Temple and her father in all that glitter, laughter, warmth and luxurious display of wines and food, could not keep her mind away from thoughts of David and the rebel camp at Valley Forge. Philadelphia was aware of the half-clad, half-fed condition of that camp, for deserters — the weaklings of the patriot cause — had brought in graphic descriptions of it. Outside, an icy wind blew, puffing the bitter snow before it in clouds. Anne pictured the frozen valley, the straggling huts of logs, David Wharton, crouching close to a fire, numb with cold and hunger. What would a plate of this food mean to him? — a glass of this Spanish wine? Comfort, at least. The easing of actual pain, perhaps — and yet she had already eaten enough food and did not care for the wine. If she could but

give this to her lover! — feed him — hold the glass to his lips! And he was cold! — shaking with cold somewhere outside in the bitter dark. But the bitter dark was clean — cleaner than this warm glowing radiance of candles, silver, gems and gleaming raiment. A sudden faintness assailed her. She turned a colourless face to her father.

"Take me away," she whispered, "I am faint."

She stood up, swaying a little. Mr. Bradford slipped an arm about her waist and took her quickly from the room into the narrow hall.

"Not here," whispered Anne. "It is hot. And the servants — and the clatter. I must sit down — in a cool place."

"The room in front, on the right," said Captain Temple. "It is quiet and cool."

They found the place without difficulty and the young woman sank upon a chair by the window. It was a little room, furnished with a few chairs, a writing-table, a faded carpet, and lit only by the flames of a moderate fire on the hearth.

"What can I get you, dear?" asked John.

"Nothing. It was the heat — and the food. So much food — and others have none! I feel stronger already, father. It is cooler here."

"I am afraid you are not well, Anne," returned the merchant, anxiously. "The p.ak slips so

quickly from your cheeks. I have noticed it many times of late."

"No! no! I am perfectly well; but I need fresh air. This little room is cool and pleasant. I feel much better now."

Captain Temple entered the room, carrying a tray in one hand and a lighted candle in the other. On the tray were a goblet of water and a small glass of brandy.

"I made your excuses to Sir William," he said, "and I have brought these myself, thinking you might not care to be bothered by a servant. A sip of the brandy, Anne! It is the general's best I assure you. It will brisk you up like magic."

Anne shook her head at the brandy but drank a little of the water.

"It was nothing but the heat of that room," she said. "I shall rest here until the dinner is over. It is so quiet here, and cool. Father, you must go back to the company now — and you, too, George."

"I'll wait a few minutes. You may want something more," said Mr. Bradford.

"They can do very well without me, for a little while," said Temple.

"The fact is, I'm demmed glad to be out of that room myself, for a little quiet and fresh air!" ex-

claimed Bradford. "It's a great honour to sit at Sir William's table, of course — a very great honour for a simple merchant like me — but I could do very well, Captain Temple, without so much fine feedin' and junketin'. I'd like to see the general giving his mind more to the field of battle and less to the dinner-table."

"Not so loud, sir! Not so loud, I pray you," cautioned Temple, with a smile. "It is not polite to look a gift-horse in the mouth, Mr. Bradford."

"Then I'll speak lower, George," returned the merchant. "So long as I say what I have to say, that's all I care about. I want to ease my feelings. This war will last till the crack of doom if the army does not change its methods. What sort of war do you call it, anyhow? Cards, dinner, dancing and cards! Pomp and vanity; food and wine; wine and food! Bah! I could do better myself."

Captain Temple flushed slightly and smiled at Anne. But for Anne, John Bradford would have heard the Englishman's opinion of the Bradford variety of loyalty as compared with the loyalty of the other Colonial gentlemen even now enjoying Sir William Howe's hospitality. These gentlemen thought as Bradford did, beyond a doubt — but instead of blustering about the English inactivity they set the English an example of energy and

daring; an example which, by the way, was ignored.

So Temple flushed, smiled at the woman he loved and held his peace. John continued his argument.

"A little less drinking of His Majesty's health in the city parlours and a little more chasing of His Majesty's enemies over the fields and through the woods is what I recommend. But I am not a soldier — just a poor merchant and the son of a farmer!"

"To tell you the truth, Mr. Bradford, I am very glad the general holds to such mild and comfortable methods of conquering the rebels," replied Temple, good-humouredly. "I enjoy a fair fight; but I am not such a beast as to enjoy spilling the blood of such men as Washington's force is composed of. They are weak with cold and hunger. Half of them are without cloaks or great-coats and half without boots. They are short of powder — of everything but an amazing, pathetic courage. They never refuse a fight; but it is enough to wring a heart of stone to see them stand up to receive a charge. No, Mr. Bradford, I have no stomach for that kind of work. I am with Sir William in the hope that starvation may scatter them, or that some other way than slaughter may bring them to their senses. They are of English blood, after all; and

when the Hessians get mixed up with them my heart is all with the enemy — with the men of my own race."

"That is all very well for poetry," returned Mr. Bradford, "but it is demmed poor sense! Yes, sir — more the talk of a poet than a soldier. Get after 'em, say I! Ride 'em down! Cut 'em to pieces! Fight, sir. Put the cold and heavy iron to 'em — sabre, bayonet, powder and lead — or, by the Lord Harry — they'll keep you hedged 'round your dinner-tables until the pit of hell freezes over."

"My dear sir, what a fire-eater you are!" retorted Captain Temple, laughing a little.

"Fudge!" exclaimed Bradford. "Well, Anne, as you do not seem to require my assistance I'll just step back to the table. Slow as Sir William is, no doubt he'll accomplish his task some day; so I must keep on the right side of him. I shall need his help, no doubt, to get redress of losses from Parliament — especially as my worthy son Barnabas is proving himself such a lusty rebel. Can't understand Barnabas! Has the leopard changed his spots? I trow not!"

Mr. John Bradford left the little room and marched back to his seat at the commander-in-chief's dinner-table. As the door closed behind

him, Anne said, "You do not think very highly of my father, George."

"My dear Anne!" he expostulated. "What an idea! I consider him an honest man — and a loving father to you, my dear lady."

"Even so, you do not think very highly of him."

"Well — I do not consider him a hero, exactly."

"Who are the heroes of this trouble?"

"The rebel general is one — Washington. I don't deny it. Our old friends the Whartons are of heroic fibre. Among those poor, mistaken devils there are hundreds of misguided heroes. And on our side? — well, our heroes are Colonials, too! There are four or five of them in the dining-room, now — but not my honest Mr. Bradford, Anne."

"No, my father is all for himself," she replied, quietly. "He has not much imagination. He cannot dream great dreams, like the great Loyalists and the great rebels. They think of nations — and he of his money-bags." She sighed. "And you think Washington a hero?"

"Yes. A mad one; but a hero. He is a rebel against his king — but a great soldier and a fine man."

"And yet — and yet you would capture him? Lead him to trial by his enemies?"

"Yes — for he is the rebel-chief and I am a

King's officer. It is my duty — and chance seems to have selected me as her agent in this matter. With Washington captured, the war is ended. I am sorry for Washington; but the good will far outweigh the evil."

"You are right, no doubt," replied Anne; "but I am sorry I listened to Barnabas. But I fear him so — and he gave me his promise, on the Bible, that if I did my part he would never again persecute me or my father. My part was to ask you to help him in his design — and now I wish to God my tongue had withered in my mouth before I had asked you!"

"Anne! Anne! are you, too, a rebel?"

"No, I am not a rebel. Let the King have what is his, I say, and govern his own justly. But even you have said that my father is an honest man — and my mother was a cousin of one of those *great* Loyalists in the dining-room yonder. She was noble — by the New England standard of nobility. And now I have plotted with a traitor against a hero! Is that noble? — or even honest?"

The blood brightened in Temple's thin cheeks.

"My dear," he said, "the sword with which you wound yourself is double-edged. You cut me deep, Anne!"

"No, I do not mean that. It is your duty to

serve blindly in this matter — to serve, no matter what the tools that come to your hands. You are an Englishman, and pledged to the King. But if warfare is not a woman's work, what right have I to assist in bringing this war to a close? The risk is not mine. Mine is the hidden hand — the coward's work but deadly stroke! *You* go openly in the uniform that lets the whole world know you for Washington's enemy; but I — God! what business have *I* with redcoats or blue! Even Barnabas does not take so ignoble a part as I — for he runs a great risk — is exposed to the danger."

"Barnabas!" exclaimed the Englishman, harshly. "He is a traitor! — a liar! — a rogue!"

"And yet our companion in this plot to capture Washington and ruin the cause of the Continentals."

"Yes — he is my associate in the scheme. But, he is not yours, Anne! You have nothing to do with it. You but delivered a message to me. If we lose, or if we win, your hands are clean of the dust of victory or of defeat — you are clean of association with that black traitor!"

"Clean?" she whispered. "You may be generous enough to call me so, George; but what I have already done — what I did for fear of Barnabas — cannot be undone."

"You are overwrought," he replied, tenderly. "You are still weak from the heat of that room. And you have been brooding over this thing. All that you did, Anne, good or evil, was give me a message from — from the miserable fellow who has been given me by chance as a tool. But I, too, am sorry that the message should have come to me through you. The thing must be carried through, though — and the sooner the better, say I."

At that moment, above the muffled sounds in the hall — the clatter of dishes and the passing and repassing of servants — breaks the clang of a heavy door. Both heard it in the little waiting-room.

"The front door," said Captain Temple. "It is not a belated guest, so it must be business of some sort. Report of a skirmish, perhaps, or of a spy captured."

Someone rapped on the door that led to the hall.

"Come in," cried Temple.

An orderly-room sergeant entered and stood at attention.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said, "but the officer of the day has sent on a rebel officer and his escort, sir, under flag of truce. He wishes to see the General, sir, concerning the immediate exchange of our Major Burton for the rebel Major Carr."

"Show the officer in here and give his escort cover in the carriage-house," replied the captain. "I will go and speak to Sir William."

"Very good, sir" — and the sergeant retired.

Temple took Anne's right hand, stooped swiftly and touched his lips to it.

"Shall I take you back now?" he asked. "The dinner must be nearly over — all but the port and punch."

"No, the room is too warm."

"Then to the drawing-room? The ladies will soon join you there."

"No, no. Leave me here where it is cool and quiet."

"But this stranger? This rebel officer?"

"I do not think he will bite me, George — and you may be sure that I shall not harm him."

"Have it your own way, Anne; but very likely the poor devil is hungry enough to bite you."

Temple left the room. The fire had fallen, by now, to bars of crimson and scarlet coals. The single candle, in its squat silver stick, scarce illuminated more than the table, in the centre of which Temple had placed it. Beside the candle stood the tray with its two glasses containing the tasted water and the untasted brandy. Anne sat in the shadow,

by the black square of the window, gazing at the candle's smoking flame. The candle needed snuffing; but she did not notice it.

"I wonder — I wonder if this officer can tell me anything of David," she whispered.

The door opened and a tall, cloaked figure entered.

"Will you be pleased to wait here, sir? Captain Temple has gone to the general," said the orderly-sergeant.

"My men?" began the visitor.

"I have received orders to find them shelter, sir."

The door closed. The rebel officer crossed the room to the hearth. Standing there, the subdued lights of falling fire and unsnuffed candle disclosed him dimly to the woman at the window. She could see the torn boot which he advanced to the glowing coals, the long folds of his cloak, a gloved hand, the gleam of a trailing scabbard. His shoulders and face were in the upper shadow. She felt nervous — almost frightened. He thought himself alone in the room and so leaned against the chimney and sighed desolately. Suddenly he turned and put out a hand to snuff the candle. He accomplished it neatly with a gloved thumb and finger. The flame returned, clear and steady. Anne, watch-

ing the man with anxious fascination, as if spell-bound, saw his hand go out to the little glass of brandy. The high collar of his cloak was hooked at the chin and hid the side of his face to his ears. The hand that lifted the glass trembled violently.

"Brandy!" he whispered. "Fire and strength! My God! — but I'll have none of it, uninvited."

He replaced the glass on the tray.

"*Oh, please!*" exclaimed Anne. "*Please* drink it. You need it, I know."

The officer turned swiftly and faced her. His back was against the steady, subdued light of the candle. Standing thus, and muffled in his great coat, he looked like a black, gigantic shadow.

"Who is there?" he whispered. "Ah! a lady. Your servant, madam."

"I am John Bradford's daughter. You — you are an officer of General Washington's, sir?"

"Yes, Miss Bradford. At your service." His voice was little more than a thick whisper.

"Then tell me — if you know anything of — David Wharton."

"Wharton! Yes, I know of him. We are close companions."

"Is he well — and happy?"

"He is in fair health — and as happy as —

as some of us. He has his work. Why do you ask?"

"We were — friends."

"Friends?"

"Yes. Very, very dear friends."

The man stepped forward.

"Anne!" he exclaimed. "Anne! For God's sake! — what do you mean? Is this another — joke?"

"Davy! You!"

In a second she was standing before him, close to him, eyes and hair aglow in the twilight, white arms and breast agleam — a glorious, intoxicating vision to the man from Valley Forge. His love leaped up in his blood and brain like fire. He trembled, but stood motionless.

"You said it was all a joke. Why do you look at me so? It was — a cruel joke." His voice was low and flat.

"A joke? Why do you speak so to me, Davy? Why — why stand there — so coldly?"

"You sent Barnabas back to the farm, that day, to tell me it had all been play on your part — all a joke! Have you forgotten it? Have you forgotten even your joke at my expense?"

"It is a lie! Davy — it is a lie! Why did you

trust him? I sent a written message, that day — to tell you it was all true — my love for you."

"My God! And now? And now, Anne?"

"I have not changed."

He crushed her to his breast and pressed his lips to her bright and fragrant hair. He felt strong, now. The need of brandy and external heat had passed. Love glowed to him, through his weather-worn cloak and shabby uniform, from Anne's slender body. He felt the caress of her fluttering breath upon his throat.

Anne, with her face pressed to that rough cloak, smelt there the wild bitterness of the smoke of many bivouac fires, the clean, harsh fragrance of frost, the finger-marks of snow, rain and wind. And this, she reflected, was sweeter and manlier than the odour of over-crowded, candle-lit rooms and rich foods.

They heard a sound at the door. Arms were unclasped. David turned and stepped forward to the table. Anne glided to her seat by the window. An orderly entered.

"The general's compliments, sir," he said, "and he begs you to come to the dining-room, sir. The ladies have withdrawn and he is alone with the gentlemen, sir."

David followed the man from the room. The door closed behind them. Anne leaned forward in her chair and touched her forehead to the cold glass of the window.

"Will he come back?" she whispered. "Shall I see him again before he goes? Oh! I must! I must! He goes back to danger and hardship — and the frozen darkness."

She left her chair and went over to the hearth. She placed a slender, satin slipper on the tile where his heavy, worn riding-boot had rested such a little while before. There was a little pool of water on the tile — of melted snow and frost. The chill moisture of it crept through her thin slipper and the inner silk. She rejoiced in the discomfort of it. Tears sprang into her eyes.

"I must — I shall — see him again before he leaves this house!" she said.

The door opened and Captain Temple looked into the room.

"What? You are still here, Anne!" he exclaimed. "The ladies have left the table to the wine-bibbers. The dancing will commence in half an hour."

He entered and crossed the floor to her side. She turned her face to him.

"Good Heavens! how beautiful you are," he

whispered. "What has happened? Your eyes are as bright as stars, Anne, your cheeks are pink as roses."

"Have you seen the rebel officer, George?" she asked.

"Yes. It is our friend, David Wharton. He is Captain Wharton, now — and a demmed fine, upstanding young man! But why are your cheeks so bright, dear Anne? Is — is there any hope for me — if I ask you again, now? It is days and days, dear, since last I asked you."

He took one of her hands between both of his. She did not withdraw it.

"George, I have seen the rebel — and spoken with him," she said in a shaking voice. "Don't you understand? Ah, please understand, my dear friend!"

"Anne! You have told him of — of the plot against —?"

"No! No! That — I forgot it. But do you think my heart is of wood? Why — why have I not learned to? — Oh, George, don't you see that I love him! — have always loved him!"

"My God! Who is it, Anne? What d'you mean?"

"I love — David Wharton. And he loves me. Long ago Barnabas told him that — that I did not

really care — and so, for these three years I have received no word from him."

Captain Temple did not indulge in a second outburst of dismay. He was very quiet. His face was in the shadow. He patted the hand that lay between his own, then released it gently. He turned away and so stood, motionless and silent. The girl's heart smote her.

"Please, please forgive me — if I have hurt you," she whispered. "I have always told you — you know, my dear friend — that I did not love you. But it is my — my wicked fault. I should not have allowed myself to — to even like you!"

"No. It is entirely my fault," he answered, quietly. "I do not regret it — not a minute, nor a pang of it! But you must remember, my dear, that though another man has won the — the honour of being your lover, I still claim the honour of being your — friend."

"I hold it precious," she replied, faintly. "My friend; and you are *his* friend, too?"

"Yes. In another — degree. All the Whartons are my friends."

He turned and kissed her hands, and turned away from her again before she could see his face.

"You will want to see him again before he rides back to Valley Forge," he said. "So I will go to

the dining-room now, and when Sir William is done with him I will — bring him here."

He crossed the room swiftly and opened the door. On the threshold he turned and bowed, then stepped back in the gleam and shadows of the hall and closed the door.

CHAPTER VIII

CAPTAIN DAVID WHARTON AND THE TWO GENERALS

Sir William Howe, commander-in-chief of the King's forces in America, received General Washington's representative with every mark of politeness, bowed him to a chair at the table, and forced him to take wine, first with himself (Sir William), and then with the company in general. He then heard what Captain Wharton had to say, read the communications from Washington, scratched his nose and nodded his head.

"Very fair, very fair indeed," he said. "And demmed civilly stated. The man is a gentleman, evidently. Yes, yes, of course!"

"Am I to take back a verbal or a written message, sir?" asked David.

"Both, my dear sir, both," returned the general. "'Tis an important matter. I shall be delighted to make the exchange — to-morrow, if convenient for you to bring in your prisoner. You must give my compliments to your commander, George Washing-

ton, and tell him that, if 'twas not for the misconstruction the busybodies in England would put on the act, I'd be proud to have him to dinner with me. Fill your glass, my dear sir. 'Tis a sound vintage, I assure you. Barrington, a quill, paper and ink! Captain, try that guava jelly, fresh up from Barbadoes. It is a good jelly. Come, sir, don't feel shy of my wine and jellies. I am not your enemy while you sit at my mahogany-tree. Vaughn, I find that punch a thought heavy, to-night — ay, and a thought too sweet. Judge Winslow, your health! Gentlemen, remember your legs! There's dancing ahead of you."

Captain Barrington, A. D. C., arrived with pen, ink and paper. He cleared dishes and glasses aside from in front of the general and put down the writing materials.

Sir William dipped the pen and squared his elbows.

"Now, how the devil am I to begin?" he asked, plucking his lips. "Let me see. My dear Sir? My dear Rebel? My dear Mr. Washington? Demn it! how am I to begin?"

"Why, sir, how does he address you?" inquired one of the Loyalists.

Sir William took up Washington's communication and read: — "To His Excellency, Major-

General Sir William Howe, K. C. B., etc., etc., Commander-in-chief of His Britannic Majesty's Forces in North America."

"Very civil," said the Loyalist. "And how does he sign himself?"

"Your Excellency's humble, obedient servant to command, George Washington, Commander-in-chief of the Army of the Republic of the United States of America."

"Very civil, Sir William," remarked Judge Winslow.

"Yes — I wish he was half as civil as he sounds," returned the general. "But I'll not be outdone in civility by any demmed rebel this side hell — begging your pardon, Captain Wharton."

"Not at all, sir," replied David, smiling.

Sir William began to write, with a hand none too steady. The other gentlemen continued their talking and drinking. Some talked and did not drink; others drank and did not talk. The general's pen squealed and spluttered and the general swore.

A very large man with grave eyes and brow but a whimsical mouth, leaned toward David.

"Are you related, in any way, to Oliver Wharton, sir?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir. I am his son," answered David.

The large gentleman put out a large, white, finely shaped hand and clasped that of David.

"Oliver and I were classmates at Harvard, and firm friends," he said. "Give him my best respects, captain. Ask him if he remembers Daniel Bliss."

"Why, sir, for that matter there is no need of asking," replied David, cheerfully. "I have often heard him speak of you, sir — of your great size and strength — of how you once held two men at arm's length, clear of the ground — one with each hand."

"Vanity, all vanity," said Mr. Bliss, smiling. "A chance bullet, fired perhaps even by some old schoolfellow, would make no more to-do over my great bulk than over the smallest rabbit in the thicket. But why do you look so happy, young sir? Egad, you smirk and glow like a victor — or like a bridegroom. Has General Howe surrendered to you?"

"No, sir. General Howe has not surrendered to me."

"Ah-ha! my lad. I am young enough to catch your tune. So you find time, off there in the snow — but here is my worthy Mr. Bradford."

John, seeing David so well received by the general and the notables, had at last left his chair and

advanced to claim acquaintance with the rebel. The two shook hands.

"I trust all the members of your family are well, David," said John. "You yourself look exceedingly thin."

"He is engaged in exceedingly thin work," said a grim-faced Loyalist named Isaac Allen. "I know how thin it is, egad! I have been out there myself. Captain Wharton, you may have seen something of 'Allen's Orphans?'"

"Yes, sir, I have met some of them. I was trying to flank three guns one day, with my company, when I met a company of your regiment in an adder-swamp. But for that meeting, sir, the guns would have been mine."

Colonel Allen chuckled. "I like you, my boy," he said.

At this point the general held aloft a folded and sealed paper and cried, "Here you are, Captain Rebel! Here's a polite letter for your commander. I've asked him to send you in with the major, for you're a man of sense and wit, sir — a most companionable young man. What you have to look so demned merry about I don't know; but, I like it, sir! I like it! Another glass, captain. Gentlemen, prime your glasses."

Every glass was filled.

"A toast," said Sir William.

Everyone got to his feet; but some, perforce, leaned heavily against the edge of the table.

"Captain — gentlemen — here's to the end of this condemned, unnatural, footlin' war!" cried Sir William. Every glass was emptied in hearty agreement with the sentiment; but, owing to trembling hands, much of the good wine went stray.

David put down his empty glass, bowed low to the general, to the right, to the left, strode to the door, turned there and bowed again.

"Good night, Your Excellency. Good night, gentlemen all."

"Good night to you, my merry rebel. Come again to-morrow," replied Sir William, waving his hand.

David found Temple waiting him in the passage. They shook hands cordially.

"I'll send word for your escort to be at the door in five minutes," said Temple. "In the meantime, Anne wishes to see you — again — before you go."

Their glances met. The Englishman's face was colourless and as still as a mask; the Colonial's, though thinned with hardships, was ruddy and alive with emotion.

"I am to congratulate you, I believe," said Temple.

"It — it is good of you," replied David, huskily. "I can scarcely realize it — yet. On several occasions Barnabas has — "

"Barnabas Bradford is a rogue and a liar," interrupted the other, scornfully.

Five minutes later David Wharton went out to the cold and dark; but so radiant did the world look to him (with the caress of Anne's incomparable lips still warm upon his), that he wondered why the men of his escort hunched so in their saddles. He swung up to the back of his own big, raw-boned charger. A sergeant spurred to him from his place in the little troop.

"We've had a square meal, sir, *and* ale," he said, "and the nags have had a feed of grain."

"Good!" returned David. "In sections of four — by the right — trot — *march!*"

When Captain Wharton was in charge of a cavalry escort he never insulted the vainglorious horsemen with infantry words of command. The pride of a trooper, even though his mount be no more than skin and bones, is a thing to consider. It was a long ride to Valley Forge; but Wharton, riding in silence two lengths in front of his leading section, did not exchange a word with his men during the whole journey beyond slowing them to a walk where the road was bad and shaking them to a trot again

where it was better. For the greater part of the journey his thoughts were busy with Anne — with the great joy that had returned so suddenly to him. Again and again he reviewed that sweet time of disclosure and revelation, and that sweet, brief time of farewell between the general's dinner-table and the cold saddle. He lived these things over again, minute by precious minute. What a miracle was this that had found him! What a marvel was this that had come to pass! Who was he, to be thus chosen and crowned, one out of the millions of the world? He breathed her name against the collar of his cloak, where the frost was now glinting. Was this figure riding through the winter night a half-starved captain of a half-starved army? Nay, a victor-king, crowned and anointed, returning from a golden city with the golden heart of the world in his possession.

In time, a pity for Temple crept into his thoughts. The Englishman's face, as he had last seen it, came clear to the eyes of his inner vision. At last his mind turned to Barnabas Bradford. He swore softly. The liar! The cheat! And yet — what of his courage? — what of his cunning, fearless work for the Great Cause? He remembered the night of the capture of the wagon of provisions, and many another daring deed that he had witnessed or heard

of. And yet the man had given a false message from his sister to her lover, and had lied since, again and again. Was he true in his present allegiance? Was he to be trusted, absolutely, in public affairs who was so utterly dishonourable in private matters? A rogue and a liar! Temple had said it — and Temple was to be depended upon to act and tell the truth.

"I shall watch him," he muttered. "Barnabas, you lying scoundrel, I'll keep my eyes open and my mouth shut. You pretend to be my friend — and yet you have tried to rob me of all the joy of life! You must walk straight hereafter, damn you, Barnabas Bradford!"

He was challenged by a sentry of an outpost. A word, and he rode by.

"What did ye do in the town, boys?" asked the sentry of his followers.

"We drank ale. We chawed on turkey bones," replied one of the troopers.

"Jumpin' Jehosophat!" exclaimed the sentry, "but you hoss-sodgers do get the fine jobs."

David smiled at this exchange of pleasantries but did not turn his head.

Farther on, he was halted by a picket and paused for a minute to speak with its commander. Five minutes later he drew rein in the middle of the

camp, dismissed the troopers, handed over his horse and went on, alone, to the small farmhouse in which General Washington had his headquarters. The time was now close upon midnight. In the snowy, trampled yard before the house a sentry paced back and forth and a corporal's guard crouched around a roaring fire, their muskets, with bayonets fixed, stacked a few yards to one side. As David opened the gate the sentry roared "Halt!" brought his musket to the "ready" and charged toward him.

"Who goes there?"

"A friend."

"The countersign?"

"Unity."

"Your business?"

"I am Captain David Wharton, with a message for His Excellency from the British general."

The sentry sloped his musket.

"Pass, friend."

David went up to the narrow door and knocked upon it with his gloved knuckles. It was opened by an orderly.

"The general is in his office, sir," said the man. "He is expecting you. This way, sir."

David followed him along the narrow chilly passage, and a moment later was standing at attention

before his beloved commander. The room, which was little more than a closet, was almost entirely filled by the big, deal table at which Washington sat. Two candles, in brass sticks, lit the table and its litter of maps and papers. The chimney seemed too large for the room and the fire too small for the chimney. A blanket was fastened, curtain-wise, across the single window. A few maps hung on the walls, forming their only adornment. A horse-pistol lay on the table, holding down a sheaf of papers. Washington, who had risen from his chair when David was announced, now stood, a tall, grim figure, with the width of the table between himself and his subordinate. The orderly retired and closed the door.

"I am glad to see you safe home again, Captain Wharton," said the general, leaning forward across the table and extending his hand. His bright, grave regard did not waver from the other's face. David stepped forward a pace, pressed the extended hand and returned glance for glance. He then produced the written message from Sir William Howe. Washington broke the seal, read the communication, and smiled fleetingly.

"General Howe, as you already know, of course, accepts my suggestion favourably," he said. "He also mentions you, captain — wishes me to send

you in with the prisoner, to-morrow, that he may have the pleasure of another chat with you."

David bowed, smiling. "The entire company of gentlemen treated me with vast kindness and consideration, sir," he replied.

"Unfortunately," said the general, "Captain Bradford has requested the duty of taking in the prisoner and bringing out our own officer."

David changed colour. This did not escape his general's keen eyes.

"May I go along with him, sir?" asked David.

"Two officers of your rank are not required for the duty, Captain Wharton."

"Very true, sir."

"Why do you wish to go? Is it for the pleasure of another chat with Sir William Howe?"

David leaned forward, bringing his face into the full light of the candles.

"I must tell you the truth, sir, even at the risk of your displeasure — and, perhaps, of injury to a brother-officer," he said. He paused for a moment, his eyes steady under Washington's level scrutiny. "I do not trust Captain Bradford," he added.

The general's face did not change a shade in its expression of watchful and somewhat grim composure.

"That is easily said," he remarked, coolly. "I

hope, captain, that you can explain your statement satisfactorily — for I should be more deeply grieved in discovering in you a back-biter than in finding Barnabas Bradford untrustworthy."

David bowed, his face crimson.

"Come round here by the fire and sit down. You have had a hard, cold ride," said the general, more kindly. "It was thoughtless of me to keep you standing so long. And how long is it since you have eaten?"

David passed around the table and sat down by the fire.

"I had some of General Howe's guava jelly, sir, fresh up from Barbadoes," he replied, smiling faintly. "And I had wine and punch, sir. I am not at all hungry."

"You must share my snack before you go — after you have explained your distrust of Captain Bradford," said Washington.

So David told him, as simply and briefly as possible, of Barnabas Bradford's mean and dishonourable act of almost three years ago — and of how he had learned the truth of it only this evening. The general, who had been watching him closely while he talked, turned his eyes to the fire as soon as he was finished. For several minutes they sat silent.

"And yet he pretends friendship for you," said the general, at last.

"Yes, sir," replied David. "And he has told me, of late, time and again, that his sister was to marry Captain Temple. This seemed natural to me — for I had lost hope. I have never asked him any questions about her. He has always volunteered the — the misinformation."

"So," murmured Washington, reflectively. And then, "You have seen a good deal of his work as an officer of this army of ours?"

"Yes, sir — and I admire what I have seen. He is a hard worker, clever and courageous."

The other nodded. "What do you suggest?" he asked.

"I have thought, sir, of saying nothing to him, at present, of what I have learned; but of watching him closely in the future — with eyes sharpened by the knowledge of this thing."

"What is it you fear?"

"An injury to the cause, sir; a design, perhaps, against your own person."

"What has inspired you with the idea, captain?"

"Miss Bradford's last words to me, to-night, sir — and her manner of saying them. She said 'Guard your general well.'"

"And her manner?"

"She seemed to be greatly perturbed, sir — and she repeated the words twice. I was too — too flustered at the time, sir, to think of asking her exactly what she meant."

The ghost of a smile softened and lightened Washington's face for a moment. He leaned forward and, gently but with great dignity, removed something from the breast of David's cloak. He held it up to the light between thumb and finger.

"A long, golden hair," he said, tenderly but unsmilingly. "Put it safely away, captain, or you may lose it."

He laid it across David's sleeve, an almost invisible thread of gold. Then he left his chair, went to the door and called for his orderly. When he returned to his seat David had recovered his composure.

"I think your plan is a good one, Captain Wharton," said the general. "Watch him; but be careful not to alarm him. Say nothing of the matter to anyone; and accompany him to Philadelphia tomorrow. I will put your name in Orders for the joint-duty."

Two minutes later the orderly entered with bread, a jug of cider and a plate of apples. General Washington did not make any apologies for the simple fare.

It was past one o'clock when David at last rolled himself in his blankets and lay down in his narrow bunk. He dreamed a variety of dreams, some inspiring and others daunting. Through them all Barnabas Bradford stalked, black, courageous, menacing.

The morning was gray and milder than usual, with a hint of snow in the heavy skies. David was inspecting his company-hospital — a log hut — when Captain Bradford entered and greeted him cheerfully. David cloaked his real feelings and returned the greeting in kind.

"I see that you are posted with me for the duty of escorting Major Burton to Philadelphia to-day and bringing Carr home," said Barnabas.

"Yes," replied David. "General Howe was kind enough to seem pleased with my conversation, last night, and asked General Washington to send me in to-day."

Bradford glanced at him keenly but swiftly. Then he laughed. "I hope Sir William is not trying to win you over to his way of thinking."

"That's his intention, I have no doubt," replied David, smiling. "But so far he has offered me nothing but several glasses of wine and rum punch — yes, and guava jelly. A square dinner, now, might win me."

"No!" exclaimed Bradford, with mock gravity. "Hold out for two square meals, a new suit of underclothing, a dozen of port and — and a step in rank. I'll do the same."

"Very well. No doubt we are worth it. When are we to start and who supplies the escort?"

"We start at ten — just two hours from now. A half-troop of Lee's dragoons for escort — the same men you had last night; but with fresh horses, I hope. By the way, did you have any exciting adventures last night?"

"Well, nothing dangerous. Sir William Howe was entertaining some friends at dinner and I came in for the wine end of it."

"You were in luck, Davy. Did you see anything of my people?"

"Yes, I saw your father. He was kind enough to remember me and shake hands."

"The dear old man," said Barnabas, with a twisted smile.

CHAPTER IX

WHY DAVID WHARTON DID NOT STAY TO DINNER

THE two Continental captains, and the English prisoner for exchange, Major Burton, rode in front. Barnabas seemed to be in the highest spirits, and was very gay and entertaining. He watched David's face closely, however. Major Burton was also feeling merry; and no wonder. He was on his way back to freedom, to his own regiment, to the wine and good-cheer of Philadelphia. The latter half of the journey was accomplished in a windless fall of snow, but without adventure. Everyone had eaten a substantial meal at a farmhouse midway between Valley Forge and the town, and the day was not as cold as usual. Upon reaching Philadelphia and General Howe's headquarters a young staff-officer met them. He shook hands very warmly with Major Burton, gave a receipt for him to David, and informed him that the officers of his regiment were waiting to receive him at Pott's Tavern. The freed major doffed his hat and gal-

loped away. Then the staff-officer gave orders concerning the stabling of the horses and sheltering of the men and led the two captains into Sir William's house.

He showed them into the little room where David had found Anne the night before, and went away to notify the general of their arrival. The room was empty. The two captains stood side by side before the fire and warmed their hands.

"I have heard," said Barnabas, "that Sir William Howe is not always such a merry companion by daylight as by candle-light, and that he sometimes loses all recollection, during the night, of friendships made the day before."

"Very likely. I think his sudden fancy for me was due entirely to the fumes of his potations," replied David. "I'll be mightily surprised if he remembers anything about me to-day."

"Let us hope that he has not forgotten his agreement to an exchange of prisoners," returned Bradford.

Just then the same young staff-officer opened the door and looked in.

"Which of you is the senior?" he inquired.

"I am the senior in the service," replied David, "but Captain Bradford is the senior on this tour of duty."

"Ah! A nice point," said the Englishman. "But I'll risk a decision, though I'm demmed if I know just which of you ranks in this case. Captain Bradawl, I'll trouble you to come this way."

"Bradford, sir. Bradford," answered Barnabas, with dignity.

"By all means, sir. Have it your own way. It is your name, not mine and it's the name of a demmed fine young woman, too. Now, in her case, I'd have no objection to changin' the name for a better — for my own, by the Lord!"

"Are you drunk so early in the day?" asked David, scornfully.

"Oh! It's you, is it? — our guest of last night. Well, sir, an' suppose I am drunk? — which I am not! *You* were drunk last night, I'll swear! This way, Captain Bradford. Never mind your senior-junior in the Rag-Tag army."

"The miserable pup!" muttered David. "He needs his ears cropped, by heaven. I'd like to do it."

Left alone he fell to pacing the room deep in anxious thought; but it was Barnabas Bradford, not the young staff-officer, who occupied his mind. "Why were we separated?" he asked himself. "What damned trick is he at, now?

I was a fool — a gull — to let him leave my sight!"

He was not left alone for more than a few minutes. The same young staff-officer returned.

"No use mopin' here, Wharton," he said. "That black-faced, piratical lookin' friend of yours is shut up with Sir William and Temple, and orders are you're both to dine here, to-night, with the general, and not start back with Major Carr until eight o'clock."

"Why?" demanded David. "By the Lord Harry! this is not according to my ideas of military duty."

"Seems damn polite of Sir William, tho' — and, now I think of it, that black-faced divil Bradford has froze his toes."

"So? He did not mention it to me! And the day is not cold."

"They're nipped, Wharton. But come, man! What's the use of mopin' here? My name's Stanfell. Come out and I'll show you 'round the town before dinner. It has stopped snowin'."

"You are very kind." David hesitated. "Yes, I should like to see the town."

Captain Stanfell, or, to be more elaborate, Captain the Honourable Faulk Stanfell, proved to be an agreeable though not brilliant companion. He was

as open as the face of a clock, as innocent of guile as a year-old child of mustaches. He was exceedingly young — and admitted it.

"I shouldn't be on the general's staff, of course, but for the fact that my father is an earl," he said. "I'm not a demmed bit of use to Buffeting Bill, you know — an' he knows it, too. Temple, now, is a clever fellow — demn clever; but I can tell you one thing, Wharton, he's not clever enough to manage."

"What is that?"

"Get Anne Bradford to marry him."

"Why does the lady refuse him, do you think?"

"Can't think, my dear fellow — unless it is that the beauty is really in love with me. Hah-hah! Let me take your arm. See, we are causin' quite a stir, Wharton! Dang my eyes, but I'll be the talk of the town to-morrow. Fact is, you know, Wharton, you condemned, ragged rebels are all the rage now. So demmed romantic, you know, campin' out there in the cold. Come! Here we are at the 'Punch Bowl.' We'll go in and have a round."

They entered the tavern, had a round, and another. Stanfell was for a third; but David pleaded a weak head. In the street again David said, "I

used to know Miss Bradford, when we were both younger. Where does she live?"

"Hell's pit!" cried the Honourable Faulk. "Why didn't you say so before? We might have been drinkin' old Bradford's stuff instead of wastin' our money at the 'Punch Bowl.' Where does she live? Why, man, I'll soon show you! Egad, we'll go and call on her!"

David turned his face away to hide from the other the exultant grin thereon.

"This is very kind of you," he said. "I should like, above all things, to renew that old acquaintance."

John Bradford's Philadelphia house was on the outskirts of the town — a very fine house, with a garden in front, yards, outbuildings and fields behind. An old, black butler opened the door to Captains Stanfell and Wharton. He gaped at sight of the worn, Continental uniform.

"Is your mistress at home, Sam?" inquired Stanfell.

"Yes, sah. Yes, sah."

"Any other callers, Sam?"

"No, sah. Not now, sah. But Cap'n Barnabas has just left, sah."

"*That* pirate! Well, Wharton, I'm demmed glad he's gone. Take up our names, Sam — Captain

Wharton an' Captain Stanfell. Hold! Before you go up, Sam, we'll try a glass of that punch of yours, if it's made."

"Yes, sah. Alwus ready, sah. Step this way, gentlemen."

So David, much against his will, was forced to step into the dining-parlour and drink a glass of punch. At last, however, the two reached the drawing-room and its mistress. Anne looked very beautiful, and her cheeks and eyes were very bright. She greeted Stanfell first, with an unusual warmth that, added to the "rounds" he had been enjoying, quite staggered him. Then, with her back to the Englishman, she clasped David's hand. She was close to him. Her bright head was almost against his shoulder.

"Davy," she whispered, "you must not stay. You must ride back to your general. You must! You must!"

He looked long and searchingly into the beautiful, anxious eyes.

"Old friend of yours, Miss Bradford," said Stanfell. "Rude to whisper — even to old friend! Once your friend, always your lover, you know. Hah! that's pretty neat — for me. What you call an epitaph, hey, Wharton!"

"My epitaph, I fear," said David, readily.

"Miss Bradford has just told me that Captain Bradford was looking for me."

Anne rewarded him for the lie with a grateful smile.

"Let him look," replied Stanfell, arrogantly. "You are his senior in that Rag-Tag army of yours, Wharton. You told me so. Let him look, demn 'im!"

"I am sorry," said Anne; "but my — my half-brother — seemed to be very anxious to find Captain Wharton. It is a matter of importance, no doubt — of vastly greater importance than sitting here with me."

"I deny it!" cried young Stanfell, valorous with his potations. "Demme, I say nay to that! *My* duty's here — you go do whatever you please, Wharton. I'm Miss Anne's humble, devoted admirer first — soldier next!"

David and the girl exchanged meaning glances.

"You are very brave, and kind, Captain Stanfell," she said.

"But can I get back to headquarters alone?" queried David. "Think of the colour of my uniform, Stanfell."

The Honourable Faulk laughed mightily. "Egad!" he cried, "one has to think plagued hard of the colour of it to see any at all. But hold,

Wharton! I took you out for a walk — and, by the Lord! I'll give you a safe pass back to headquarters. Paper! Ink! Egad, I will show my authority!"

He wrote — "Pass this officer of the Rebel Army, Captain David Wharton. Molest him not — or God help you! He is on the business of the two Generals and under a flag of truce. (Signed) Faulk Stanfell, Captain, D. A. G., etc."

"Here you are, Wharton," he said. "You won't need it, between here an' Sir William's house — but if you do, use it. Use it hard! Knock 'em down, Wharton — an' then, when they're ready to hit you back, show 'em that pass. It'll stiffen 'em, you take my word!"

Anne accompanied David to the door of the drawing-room.

"You must go, without a word to anybody," she whispered.

"Yes, dear heart," replied David, pressing his lips to her hand.

"Go right to Washington. I have heard a rumour. Do not wait for dinner."

"You may be sure of that, dearest."

"Will you use the pass?"

"Not unless I have to. If I must — yes."

"God speed you, Davy!"

"God keep you, my beloved!"

Anne returned to Captain Stanfell.

"Whisperin' again," said he, wagging a finger at her.

She laughed softly. "You will forgive us, I know," she said. "Captain Wharton and I were old sweethearts."

"I'd turn rebel myself to hear you say the same of me," said Stanfell.

The early winter dusk was gray in the streets when David retraced his steps, unmolested, to General Howe's headquarters. He did not enter the house, however, but passed into the stable-yard by way of a narrow alley. He crossed the yard and opened a stable door. He was challenged by one of his own men — one of Lee's dragoons.

"I am not trying to steal your horses," he said.

"Oh! It's you, Captain Wharton!"

"Yes, I want my horse. Is he here?"

The man called out, "Dick, is Captain Wharton's horse ready?"

The reply came, "Yes. It has been fed and watered."

"Good! Bring it out. The captain wants it." Then, turning to Wharton, the man asked, "Did you see Captain Bradford, sir?"

"No. Why? Was he looking for me?"

"Yes, sir. He came here himself for his horse and seemed to be in a terrible rush, and in a pretty bad temper, too, sir, I should judge by what he said to Dick there, for not getting the horse out quick enough. He asked if you had taken your horse, sir."

What was Barnabas up to now, David wondered. He felt like letting out a little himself on Dick, who was getting his horse out none too quickly. He must not meet Barnabas. He must get to Valley Forge without anybody knowing it, and to make this possible every minute was precious. Yet he was careful not to show too much haste.

"Well, if Captain Bradford returns before I do, tell him I won't be long, that I've gone on a little affair of my own in town."

At this moment the horse was led into the yard from the stables, and David stepped out hastily to it. The men with whom he had been talking grinned knowingly after him. As he was about to get into the saddle David hesitated, then turning towards the grinning dragoon standing in the stable, he said,

"This uniform: I don't suppose it would be wise for me to ride through the streets like this even if it is pretty dark. Have any of the boys got a cloak

I could borrow for a little while to cover this uniform with?" The man looked thoughtful, scratched his chin, and replied,

"Well, there's this here Englishman I know as is pretty well set up, I might — a — if I only knew where he was."

David sprang into the saddle.

"I'll risk it," he cried. "Here goes."

He trotted across the yard and down the narrow alley into the street. It was quite dark by now, and he felt certain that by keeping to the less frequented streets he would be able to pass unmolested from the town. It would be time enough for the trouble and suspicious questionings to begin when he reached the outposts. He went at a fast trot down the avenue and turned into the first branch street that offered itself. Here he put his horse to the gallop. Now he was a messenger indeed. Perhaps the safety of Washington and of the whole cause depended on his getting to Valley Forge. He ached to plunge the spurs into his horse: to get out of the town into the open country, but he dared not attract too much attention. He thanked Heaven that the streets were but dimly lighted and that the new-fallen snow muffled the hoof-beats.

He had been riding for some eight or ten minutes

before he was at last held up. There were very few people on the streets at this hour of the day, and those few people that he had passed close to had done no more than stop and stare after him. But finally, just as he was passing a cross street at a good gallop, a cloaked figure happened to turn the corner. David saw at a glance that it was a British officer. He breathed a little prayer but did not slack his pace.

The officer stopped abruptly as the rebel captain swept by. Then quickly recovering from his amazement he shouted in a commanding voice for him to stop. But David had no intention of doing so. He was already far up the street, and he knew the officer could do nothing but raise an alarm; and it would take time to do that. But suddenly David spied another man coming down the street towards him. He drew his horse up and turned it about as though he had just heard the commands of the British officer. He rode slowly back to him. As David came up the officer asked sharply,

"Who are you?"

"Captain Wharton, sir."

"Damn me, you're a rebel soldier. What does this mean?"

By this time David had come into the faint rays

of the street lamp. The officer stepped over to his horse.

"I am on the business of Sir William Howe and General Washington," he replied shortly.

The man, evidently an officer of high rank, was in a very bad humour. He snapped out,

"Dismount, sir!"

For answer David slowly put his hand into his pocket and drew forth his pass. He unfolded it and handed it to the officer. Snatching it from his hand the officer strode nearer to the light and tried to make out the small handwriting of the Honourable Faulk Stanfell. Failing in this, owing to the dimness of the light and the weakness of his eyes, the man swore abundantly and shifted about here and there trying to get the paper clear of shadows. Presently the man which David had seen approaching came up: the stranger seemed very anxious to get by without attracting notice, but the officer glanced up from his paper at this moment and, spying him, called out: "Pardon me, sir, but one moment, please." The man stopped and looked around doubtfully.

"I can't make out this writing." The officer explained, "I wish you would help me."

Without a word the man came over to them, took

the paper in a trembling hand, and held it to the light.

"Pass this officer of the Rebel Army," he read out slowly, "Captain David Wharton —"

The reader turned suddenly to the horseman.

"What, David, you!" he exclaimed, thrusting his hand out to him.

Wharton grasped the hand as he recognized John Bradford. But he was not pleased. This was just the time he did not want to meet anybody that knew him.

"How are you, Mr. Bradford," he cried cheerfully.

"This is a lucky meeting. You will be able to convince this officer for me. I'm on the business of Howe and Washington, and I'm in a hurry, too."

"Yes, yes, David. Let me see. How does it read?" He lifted the paper to the light again and continued. "Captain David Wharton. Molest him not — or God help you. Ah! Hum!" Bradford coughed and paused in doubt. The officer started and stared at him sharply.

"What's that, sir? What's that you read?"

"'Or God help you,' sir, it reads," continued Bradford. "Let me see. Yes, yes! He is —"

"Whose name is signed?" snapped the officer.

"He is on the business of the two Generals and under a flag of truce. (Signed) Faulk Stanfell, Captain, D. A. G., etc."

"Faulk Stanfell. Faulk Stanfell," muttered the officer. "Ah, yes, the young officer on the general's staff. Yes, yes, I remember now." He thought a moment — Then turning to Wharton, he said, "All right, pass, sir."

"Give him the paper," he ordered, turning to Bradford. "And thank you, sir, very much for your services."

Without more ado the British officer strode off into the night with a pace that promised nothing good for the Honourable Faulk.

Wharton leaned down from his horse, took the paper and grasped Bradford's hand.

"Thank you, Mr. Bradford, a thousand times. Sorry you were put to this trouble."

"Not at all, David. Not at all. Glad to have helped you even if you are on the wrong side. Call on us when next you come to town."

David thanked him again, then galloped off up the street. He was smarting from the delay, and he vowed it would take a whole regiment to stop him another time. As he rode from the town he was challenged by a soldier, but when he galloped by he noted that his challenger was hardly able to

stand upon his feet. Before he had passed very far David heard the soldier singing a drinking song at the top of his voice. There was left but one difficult point to pass. Now that he was clear of the town he would find little danger of being intercepted in this open country if he could once get by the British outposts. He thought for a moment of taking to the woods and fields on approaching these outpost camps and thus having a good chance of getting by unseen. But then he reasoned that if he were caught under such circumstances his pass would be of little help to him. He decided that the wiser way was to ride up boldly, show the pass, and take his chances at being detained.

Presently some distance across the fields he spied the camp-fire of the outpost. He touched the spurs to his horse and galloped madly towards it. He didn't know the nature of the danger that threatened his general, nor how imminent it was, but one thing he felt sure of and that was that the fate of the whole Continental army rested with him, and that he would get through to warn it one way or another. Nothing could stop him.

A challenge rang out from up the road.

David drew in his horse and yelled back.

"I am a messenger on the business of the generals."

He approached the sentry on the trot. The soldier barred the way.

"Your pass," he demanded.

David gripped his reins fiercely. This perfectly disciplined machine-like soldier sent a chill through him. He began to doubt whether the little note written by a half-drunken captain would be of any use to him in dealing with such men as these. He drew the note from his pocket. About a dozen paces from them at the side of the road glowed the big fire. Near this stood a small man; evidently the officer in command. The sentinel motioned to David to give his paper to this officer, commanding him at the same time to dismount. Desperate in his impatience David hesitated to obey. Instinctively he glanced about him. This was a fatal move. It aroused stronger suspicions. The officer by the fire regarded him narrowly, and the sentinel held his rifle as though he expected the rebel horseman to make a dash for it. David dismounted and walked his horse over to the fire. He saluted and handed his pass to the little man.

Without a word the officer took the paper, unfolded it, and read. After a moment he glanced up at the rebel messenger, scrutinized him keenly, and read the note again. Meanwhile David's heart sank within him. Although the officer had not spoken

a word his manner seemed to say all too plainly, "Nobody passes here without us knowing *all* about him." The man began to shake his head very slowly. David nervously pulled at the saddle with one hand. Oh, if only the sentinel wasn't quite so close. He felt that the fellow had not resumed his beat, but was standing where he had left him. He dared not openly look around. The officer stopped wagging his head, but continued to stare thoughtfully at the paper. David bent over and fumbled with a stirrup, and while in this position glanced under his arm to where he had left the sentinel. He was no longer there. Evidently he had walked a short distance down the road.

"No, no," spoke the little man softly, but very decidedly, "this is *not* enough."

David straightened himself up, trembling he knew not from what. He had decided on his course of action if refused leave to pass.

"We will have to detain you, Captain Wharton, whilst we communicate with General Howe. I cannot accept this. We will have word back here in half an hour at the latest."

The man turned half around and was on the point of summoning the sentinel, when out of the corner of one eye he caught a sudden movement of David's. He flashed around, at the same moment springing

at the horse. David was caught when but half in the saddle. But he was not caught at a disadvantage. He broke the man's hold for a second with a blow from his fist and just managed to wriggle into the saddle before he was gripped again. This little man was all muscle. He fairly sprang on to the horse in his endeavour to drag David down, breathing through his teeth as he struggled, "No you don't, damn it; no you don't." He had quite forgotten to summon the guard, and David thanked God for it. Fearful lest any second the sentinel would reappear David fought desperately. He was the larger and the stronger of the two, or the battle could have but one ending. David got his arm around the other's neck and almost succeeded in hurling him to the ground, but the man's grip held and David was nearly torn from the saddle. To save himself he dug his heels into the horse's belly. The horse, stung by the deep cutting spurs, lunged forward and galloped off up the road with the two men clinging to its back. At this moment the sentinel caught sight of them, and started shouting to arouse the soldiers in encampment close by.

For the time David gave all his attention to keeping himself from being thrown. He had a stout saddle to cling to, and both his hands were occupied in clinging to it. As for the little officer, he was in

a better position. He clung to David. For the first few moments he had his hands full in doing this; but after the first mad gallop the pace of the horse became more even. Then the little man withdrew one arm about David's waist. Steadying himself he aimed a powerful blow with his fist for just behind his opponent's ear. But he missed his mark and struck a less vulnerable mark. It served however to bring David's attention back sharply to the situation. He took a new hold on the saddle with his left hand, twisted about slightly, and managed to grip the other man by the collar of his coat with his right. By sheer strength he forced him down on to the side of the horse, and as the Englishman was struggling there to keep his hold David seized the advantage offered to strike a hard downward stroke with his fist on to the other's upraised face. The blow was true, landing on the point of the jaw. The man clutched convulsively, then slid limply from the horse. It was none too soon. David heard muffled hoofbeats close behind him. He spurred his horse on. As he rounded a bend in the road a shot rang out. Fearing he would have little chance if seriously pursued, his horse being already tired from the long ride in from Valley Forge that day, he turned into the woods and waited. Two horses galloped by. He gave them time to get a

good distance ahead of him, then turned back into the road and trotted on. He kept his ears open, and he stared into the dark ahead of him for some sign of his pursuers returning.

An hour went by, and no sign of the horsemen. David was wild with impatience. He had been riding at a slow trot for fear of running into them. His senses were aching from the strain. Every other tree took the indistinct form of a man or of a horse. Suddenly voices sounded clearly but a short distance in front of him. He turned his horse abruptly to the side and forced his way in between the close standing trees. He stopped just within, knowing that the darkness would hide him. Presently the two men rode by slowly and silently. The crunch of horses' hoofs died away, and the road was open for him to Valley Forge. The minute he felt that the men were out of hearing he broke from his hiding-place, paused in the road to listen, then put spurs to his horse and started on a wild ride on which the fate of a great cause hung.

Shortly before midnight David heard the welcome challenge from the outer pickets. He gave the password and rode up to them. He was about to speak when suddenly he toppled over and slid to the ground. The excited guards gathered around him. They helped him to his feet, and he

told them in broken sentences of the threatened danger to the general. He ordered that word be taken directly to Washington. Two of the pickets helped him through the snow to their little camp.

CHAPTER X

THE EXPEDITION IS DISPATCHED IN HASTE

THE conversation between Anne and Captain Stanfell began to lag. Stanfell was getting very sleepy, and despite his many accomplishments and best efforts his attempts at entertaining his beloved Miss Bradford were failures. After a time he gave up trying to say witty things and sank back in his chair. But perhaps it was partly Anne's fault. Her thoughts were on other things. The fact that she had been *used* by an unscrupulous traitor in this plot of kidnapping the rebel general-in-chief preyed upon her mind. She felt, at times, a powerlessness against the evil of Barnabas that chilled her. If he had made her do this thing what could he not make her do? She arose nervously from her seat and started to walk up and down the room. With all her fierce and growing desire to do right and be noble in everything in life, in contrast to Barnabas and his wretched mother, would he turn her aside into doing his devil's will? She stopped still under

the big, glowing lamp, her head bowed and her small hands clinched.

Stanfell, aroused by Anne's movements, had been watching her silently and with increasing wonder. Now, when she came to such a dramatic stand under the light, he sat straight up to see the better. Presently he began wagging a finger at her, hoping to attract her attention. He was just about to speak when the door opened and in stepped Barnabas. Anne looked up at the sound of his step and for a moment they regarded one another. Barnabas glanced towards Stanfell.

"Ah! You're here then, are you? I thought this might be the most likely place to find you." He grinned at his sister. "And Captain Wharton, is he here too?"

"It seems to me you're uncommon anxious to find Wharton," said Stanfell. "This is the second time you've been here in the last hour to find him, and —"

"No," broke in Anne, "David left a short time ago for General Howe's."

Barnabas looked at her narrowly.

"What did he return so quickly for, Anne, and alone?" he demanded.

"Demn me, why, of course to see you," said Stanfell. "You were looking for him, but I told

him not to go, I did. My duty's right here with Miss Bradford."

"*I* was looking for him? I wasn't looking for anybody until just ten minutes ago, when I started out in search of Wharton."

The Honourable Faulk turned to Anne for assistance.

"Miss Bradford, wasn't he hunting for Captain Wharton? Now, wasn't he? Egad, I had to get him home on my own signature."

"I'm afraid Captain Stanfell has things mixed," said Anne with a little smile. "David has returned to headquarters, to General Howe's, in search of you."

Anne felt for the first time in her life at ease now with Barnabas. The storm of bitterness that was raging in her dispelled her fears of him, and every move she made against him and his evil plans was balm to her wounds.

"But how could he get back alone?" demanded Barnabas suspiciously.

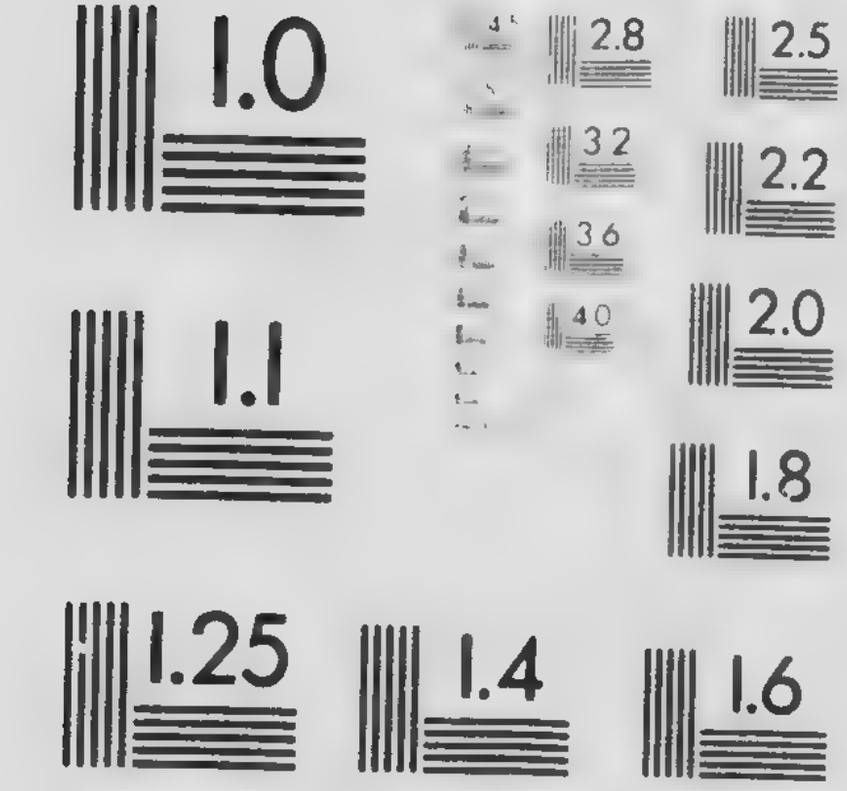
"Barnabas, do sit down and be quiet and stop cross-examining me," said Anne, turning on him impatiently. "Why couldn't Captain Stanfell give David a pass back to headquarters? How do *you* manage to travel about town all by yourself?"

Anne resumed her seat near Stanfell.



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"And why not, Captain Bradford?" demanded the Honourable Faulk. "Demn me, why not? I wrote him a pass that would take him to the ends of the earth; — anywheres he wanted to go." He finished with a long sweep of the arm.

Barnabas turned suddenly toward the door.

"Well, I'll get back to Howe's then and find David." He glanced back to Anne. "You're telling me the truth, Anne? He has gone back there looking for me!"

"You'll find him there, no doubt," said Anne quietly.

At this moment heavy steps sounded on the stairs without the door.

"Who is coming?" asked Barnabas. "Ah, it sounds like the Old Man's footsteps."

Mr. Bradford appeared in the doorway. He paused on seeing his son, and for a moment his face clouded, then with an evident effort he smiled. He had not yet got used to Barnabas reformed and did not trust him.

"Ho, sir, you seem displeased at finding me here. Let bygones be bygones and take me as you find me to-day. We all have our little past, you know, and some have their little present, too. However, I must run if I'm to catch David at Howe's."

"David?" demanded John with surprise. "Are you looking for David Wharton? He passed me this half-hour gone, riding it through the town as though the devils were after him."

"Riding?" hissed Barnabas. "Where was he going? In what direction? Quick, man, towards Valley Forge?"

"Yes, towards Valley Forge."

"Oh, father, are you sure it was David?" asked Anne. "How could you see in this light?"

"Just it, I couldn't," returned her father. "He was stopped by an English officer, a colonel or something, and I had to read David's pass, the pass written by Captain Stanfell, out to him."

Without a word Barnabas slipped from the room and hurriedly left the house. John breathed a sigh of relief, and picked out the most comfortable chair and sank back into it. Stanfell studied the ceiling in some doubt a moment or two and then asked,

"Did you say the officer who read my pass was a colonel, Mr. Bradford?"

"I think he was," said John shortly, unwilling to be disturbed any more.

"Demn me, a colonel," soliloquized Stanfell, stroking his hair thoughtfully. "A colonel. Seems to me there's a colonel most everywhere, poking his

nose into private correspondence." Soon however he forgot his trouble and sank back sleepily into his chair.

Meanwhile Barnabas made his way, with all possible speed, back to Sir William's. He immediately went to the stables and inquired again if Captain Wharton had taken a horse. On learning that he had, Barnabas hurried into the house and found Sir William and had a short talk with him. As they were talking Temple entered the room.

"Captain Bradford says how in all probability Captain Wharton has got wind of our plans and has gone to warn the camp at Valley Forge," said the general. "I agree with him that we must act with all possible dispatch." They talked earnestly in low tones for a few minutes, then all three arose from the table.

"Gentlemen," said Sir William. "We must now drink to the success of this little affair." He rang a bell, and on a servant appearing Sir William ordered the punch. When it arrived the three stationed themselves around the bowl, and the commander-in-chief himself filled the glasses.

"What this expedition means to His Majesty, to England and to every good Christian that abhors

a fool war, I won't explain to you, as you already understand. Here, then, gentlemen, may it succeed!"

They drained their glasses.

Ten minutes later Captain Bradford stood out in the big courtyard, chatting to different members of his troop. He took great pains that most of the men saw him before at last he went into the big unused shed, where the men were to have dinner served to them, and lay down on a bed of straw. The spacious courtyard was well lighted by big coach-lanterns stuck about here and there on short poles. Aproned cooks hurried to and fro from the steaming kitchen to the shed where the troopers were to eat their dinner. The half-starved men from Valley Forge lent willing hands to the carrying of heavy and savoury pots. Even what little bustle and excitement that was here meant a great deal to men who had spent so many months out in the wilds. They even quite forgot their good cause for which they were such willing sufferers for the moment. A good dinner was all they were living for now, and until they had that, they would think of nothing else. They laughed, they joked, they sang. When a man emerged from the kitchen under the weight of a great dish that seemed to bow him down, four troopers rushed to help him, and

while all were attempting to get their hands on the dish at the same time, they jogged against the carrier so that his feet slipped on the snowy ground, and he came down dish and all.

There was a lull throughout the courtyard. If china was broken *after* dinner it wouldn't have bothered anybody much, but a crash of breaking china *before* dinner caused the hungry hearers the deepest of misgivings. Everybody ran to the spot. The man who had been carrying the dish, one of Sir William's English servants, after he had received the contents of the broken platter, three turkeys and much hot gravy, over his person, got to his feet in a blind rage, and started to show the rebel ruffians what they were. The good-natured troopers, however, being sorry for the accident they had caused (and they were more sorry for themselves, as it was their dinner, than for the man who had received so much hot gravy), gathered up the three fowls off the snow on to pieces of the platter, and attempted to scrape the congealed gravy from the servant's clothes. They begged pardon, though quite ineffectually, over and over again, until at last, finding that it was of no avail, but that their grandmothers, ancestors, themselves and the cause for which they fought, were being sent to perdition as heartily as ever, no matter how energetically they

scraped the gravy from their tormentor's back, they desisted and fled for the dinner-table to deposit the three fowls. Shouts of laughter broke out at their retreat.

Within the house all was light and bustle, too. It was nearing the dinner hour and Sir William was having some distinguished gentlemen, just arrived from England, to dine with him. Sir William was shut up in his little dressing-room, getting fretfully into his evening clothes. He was just deciding for the thousandth time that all this was a fool business and no war at all, and if England understood that other countries were not all like herself, the war would be ended in a week. He indulged in a little quiet cursing of King George and Lord North, and the English public in general, who were sitting at home criticizing and condemning his work. He decided every time he got into a very bad humour that he would resign the command immediately. In fact in the course of getting one boot on to a sore foot he resigned his command three times and was beginning on the fourth resignation when the boot went on.

Temple was occupying himself with other business than dressing for a good dinner. Immediately after his last conference with Howe and Barnabas, he had busied himself with getting half of his troop

together. He ordered the men to go quietly to a big empty room in the back of the house. There after ten or fifteen minutes he met them and explained the course of action decided on by the general; although the general was not mentioned as having anything whatever to do with this little expedition. Temple referred to it as though it was all an idea of his own which he was carrying out quite independently. It was now quite dark without and Temple considered the time ripe for the first important move. He went to the window that gave on to the courtyard and looked out. Most of Bradford's men were at this moment gathered about the swearing English servant, and nearly all of the rebel soldiers were out in the courtyard, out of reach of any weapons that might be lying about in the sheds.

"Now," said Temple, turning to his men, "file out quietly and take your stand as I explained to you. Let there be no bungling now and we'll have everything done quickly and quietly. There's not an instant to lose. Even at this moment perhaps word is being carried to Valley Forge. Our only chance is in speed."

The men slipped from the room, descended into the kitchen and there lined up, fifteen men at each of the doors that opened to the courtyard. Each

man carried a small bundle of clothes under his arm. At a word from Temple the two lines filed out into the yard, and formed themselves in a great loose circle enclosing the whole of the open space. As they walked from the house they were taken little heed of. Everybody at that moment was watching the three soldiers conveying the three fowls to the dinner shed.

Temple's voice rang out.

"I want every man to go into the big shed there; every man of you." He stood in the centre of the yard. The Americans stared at the English officer with surprise not unmixed with suspicion. Remarks and some protests were made here and there, but the general feeling was one of good nature even if the young Englishman's order was a little abrupt. Moreover, the dinner was laid in the same shed.

As all his men came filing into the room at once, Barnabas got up from his bed of straw and demanded of them what was up.

"We were ordered in here, sir," answered the men.

"Ordered in? Who ordered you in here?" demanded Barnabas, making his voice very fierce.

At that moment Temple entered, after having posted some of his men armed with muskets at the door and windows.

Barnabas drew himself up and looked sternly at Temple. He could always play a part, and he loved the game. He could put himself into his acting to such a wonderful degree, that when he was playing the hypocrite he was much more genuine than when he was content to be his ordinary self. He demanded sternly of Temple,

"Sir, what does this mean?"

For a moment Temple was tempted to ignore him altogether. He hated this work and did it only because it was his duty, and the evident pleasure that Barnabas derived from his devil's work sickened him. He wondered at that moment if the man before him had any inkling of what honour was.

"I'm just about to tell you, if you'll listen," answered Temple shortly. Thanks to his hate for Barnabas, he did not find it difficult to play *his* part.

"Men — eh — gentlemen," began Captain Temple, turning his back on Barnabas, "you won't be kept from your dinner ten minutes. All you must do is this. I want every man to drop his shabby uniform and put on these others in exchange. He pointed to a heap of clothing which a couple of his men were piling just inside the door.

There were growls of protest in every direction, and Captain Barnabas began a speech of big, indignant words when Temple broke in.

"There!" he cried, jerking his head forward, and shooting out a hand at the men. "Shed those clothes quickly and quietly! Do you hear? At this door are my men, well armed; you haven't a sword amongst you. I'm here for business. Call it by what names you please, but get those clothes off."

"*You go to Hell!*" roared Barnabas, playing his part well and making a rush at Temple.

"If Barnabas is at such pains to be realistic, I ought to be realistic too," thought Temple. He jumped aside out of the way and landed out with his fist on Barnabas' ear.

By this time the commotion amongst the men caused by Temple's words was becoming an uproar. A bench or two was quickly knocked to pieces to serve as clubs, and defiance was growing fierce and loud, when Temple spoke a word to one of his men at the door. In ran five British troopers and stood at attention near their captain. These armed men had a quieting effect.

"Now, gentlemen," continued the English captain, "the quicker you do this the better. There's your dinner getting cold. You shall not be put

to further inconvenience. These clothes you'll find better than your own."

"Seize this man," he ordered, turning to his own men and pointing to Barnabas. Temple dodged aside as the traitor captain came at him, and all the angry troopers shouted with scornful laughter, thinking the Englishman afraid. Barnabas was seized by two of the English troopers.

"You cur," he hissed, beside himself with now genuine fury and struggling to get at Temple. "You dog, Temple, striking me."

Temple stepped over to the end of the long dinner-table and shouted out very emphatically,

"If any man refuses to obey he'll be shot. That's all." He said the "that's all" with a snap of the mouth and turned away towards the door, biting his lips. He was ashamed of his weakness, for he felt weak at that moment. This *was* a traitor's work and better suited to the practised devil near him than to himself. Anne's words came to his mind, "And now I have plotted with a traitor against a hero! Is that noble? — or even honest?" The words cut more deeply than ever. Then he roused himself and tried to throw aside his doubts. After all, he reasoned, he was a man and in war and was doing a man's work. These fears were for women. His mind was relieved after these reflec-

tions; but deep in his heart he wondered where was the feeling of unlimited strength that he always had when doing work that he knew to be noble.

Barnabas, kicking and struggling, was carried away to be locked up. Then there followed ten minutes of tense stillness while the Americans were obeying the orders given them, while under the flag of truce, at the muzzles of muskets. Temple sat on a broken box in a corner and tried to look stern and unconcerned, but every minute he hated himself more, and Anne's words burned deeper into his brain. Presently he summoned ten of his men and ordered them to collect the rebel uniforms and to distribute the clothing which he had brought in exchange. When this was completed Temple got up and forcing more dignity into his voice and bearing than was necessary, said,

"Every stitch which we have borrowed shall be returned to you to-morrow. You cannot leave this shed until to-morrow morning. There is your dinner."

As Temple was turning away out jumped a small man into the clear space in front of him and demanded of him what devil's game was this that they, coming peacefully under the protection of a flag of truce, should be robbed of their clothes and then held prisoners. The little man waved his fist

accusingly at Temple and sent his words well home.

For a moment Temple thought it better to ignore him and pass out. But this for some reason he found impossible. He turned and said simply,

"It is war."

This was the only explanation he knew of; and he went out followed by his men. After posting two men at the door and one at each of the two windows, he had all the lights extinguished and the courtyard left in darkness, save where here and there faint rays struggled through the shuttered windows of the house. He then reentered by the kitchen door, followed by the remaining troopers.

Twenty minutes later men entered the dark courtyard from the alleyway. Barn doors were softly opened and horses brought out, and there followed a subdued noise of bustle and preparation. Presently in twos and threes they rode from the courtyard down the alleyway. The horses' hoof-beats were deadened by the new fallen snow. On reaching the street they quickly formed themselves into line two abreast, and at a word from their commander started off down the street in the direction of Valley Forge.

CHAPTER XI

FOILED

THE little body of twenty-eight horsemen galloped on unnoticed until they neared the outposts of Howe's army a short distance from the town. Here was the same little officer in charge of affairs that had caused such trouble to David Wharton in his wild ride to Valley Forge a few hours before. The officer looked surprised when these troopers rode up, especially as they were clad in Continental uniforms; and it took nothing less than the formidable signature of Sir William Howe himself to ease his suspicions. Temple, of course, had foreseen this difficulty and had procured from the general-in-chief a note written clearly and emphatically to anyone whatsoever who, thinking this body of horsemen to be rebel soldiers might try to interfere with their plans. After passing the British outpost the little company swept on. Every man felt to some degree the stimulus of excitement. These British soldiers were not used to any such

stimulus, even when on the field of battle, but the secrecy and strangeness of their mission thrilled them now. Here they were in the wilderness of that far-away New World, America. They were clad in the enemy's colours, and they, a mere handful of men, were to kidnap a general-in-chief; to pick him out of the very heart of his army, and take him home. It was this prospect they enjoyed. The element in this work of skill and daring was so vastly different from the mechanical give and take of the battle-field. Every man felt himself in this expedition not one of a whole, an automaton, but he felt himself to be of individual importance. Each man felt himself responsible for the success of the expedition.

Barnabas, clad in a private's uniform, rode at the foot of the column. He kept as far from Temple as he could. That Barnabas should lead the expedition safely past the American outposts was one of the conditions agreed to, so, when just ten minutes before the horsemen left Howe's house for Valley Forge he was released from his prison room and told to give up his uniform to Temple in exchange for a ragged private's outfit, he had to obey. It was for his own interest that he obeyed. But while this man could control his feelings as long as there was much to be gained by his doing so, when

that incentive was withdrawn he was no longer master of himself. He had been struck by Temple, and he had not got back at him. That burned in his brain like a hot iron. That he, Barnabas Bradford, had been struck, and had done nothing. As he rode there, close on the heels of the silent company, he reviewed in his mind over and over again the scene that had taken place in the shed before so many eyes: and every time his mental picture reached the climax, the blow from Temple, the blood rushed to his face and he grew dizzy. Finally, feeling it to be wiser to bide his time to settle with the Englishman, he tried to throw these too vivid pictures out of his mind, but having seldom attempted to master his mind before, he now found this impossible; the memory devils would come back and drive him from his repose into a fever of hate. At last, unable to hold his pent-up feelings any longer, he drove his spurs into his horse and galloped up to Temple. He rode beside him for some time without a word, as though his very nearness to the object of his hate eased the overflow of his feelings. Temple, too, had evidently been thinking of Barnabas, for he never turned his head but seemed to know instinctively who was riding beside him. In these few minutes of silence far more damning bitterness passed between these two men

than was afterwards expressed by their mere words. When at last Barnabas did speak, his voice was very deceptive in its gentleness.

"You haven't seen the last of me," he said. "You're going to see lots more of me." His voice was even, neither rising nor falling.

"All right," said Temple very, very simply: then he fairly exploded. "Damn you, devil Bradford; you traitorous fiend. God forbid that I ever see your face again!"

He spurred his horse on a few paces ahead of the men.

Barnabas laughed softly to himself and followed Temple.

"You forget, Temple," he said as soon as he got close to him, "you forget that this little expedition, as well as your necks, depends on me, yes, on me. Ha! Ha! I hadn't thought of that myself. Why, that'll be very easy; we come to the outposts, and pass them safely, and then when we are well within the trap, I give the warning on my musket here and you fellows get cut to pieces, while I escape by a path well known to me. Ha! ha! ha! Yes, Temple, perhaps your God has heard your prayer, and will forbid you ever seeing my face again."

There was a short silence, during which the rhythmical thudding of the horses' hoofs sounded

ghostly indeed, for the snow-laden trees crowded closely on each side of the road: these caused a muffled sound, as of a heavily curtained room, when the troopers galloped by.

"Now you're being honest and showing out in your true colours," said Temple at last, having regained his composure. "So you're a double traitor; I guessed as much. One thing's certain, if you play this trick now you'll hang either in Washington's camp or in Howe's; it depends upon which side you're on at the time."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Barnabas. "Well, you won't be there to see it."

Barnabas gradually dropped back to his former place, turning over in his mind his plan of action. He had made the threat more to show Temple what he had it in his power to do, than with any intention of carrying it out. He felt that to betray the Englishmen would be a dangerous way of getting vengeance, and his reward if they succeeded was to be a good one. He decided again to bide his time.

They rode on hour after hour, moving at an impatient walk, now breaking again into a gallop. The road was hard and comparatively even under the loose snow, owing to the hard packing of the old snow. For many miles at a time the way led

through heavy forests, and then, at a sudden turning, it would come out into the open spaces of the fields; then would twinkle the yellow lights of a farm-house. This all was of interest to the English soldiers, some of whom had just come out from England a few weeks before. They talked and joked to their hearts' content, and made puns ten-tenths of which were very bad. Their talk was mostly of England and the comparing of American scenery, etc., with the English.

When they had covered about half the distance to Valley Forge Temple turned aside and led the way up to a big farm-house. A light shone from an upper window. Before they reached the door the window was thrown up and a woman's voice demanded who they were.

Temple waited a moment in hopes that Barnabas knew the people of the house and would reply. Also he feared lest his English accent would betray him. But as his waiting proved to be in vain he called out.

"Madam, we are American soldiers. We want to buy a little feed for our horses, and something for ourselves, if you have it."

"Who are you? What's your name?"

"I'm Captain Morgan," he replied, giving the first rebel name that came to his memory. "We're

returning to Valley Forge after an examination of the English outposts about Philadelphia."

The light was withdrawn from the room and presently appeared at the front door.

Owing to Temple's having cautioned his men not to talk too much, and also owing to the woman's ignorance of military news, the trick worked out successfully. Food was produced for both the horses and men, and it is needless to add heartily partaken of. But no time was wasted. As soon as they were finished Temple paid the woman liberally and ordered the men into their saddles. They took a moment to fill and light their pipes, then they stalked out of the cosy, warm kitchen with its now glowing fire into the black winter's night. But now they felt a great deal jollier than when they had arrived there.

It was about midnight when they spied the twinkle of the outpost fires of Washington's army. Temple called a halt, and, in a voice polite as he could make it, summoned Barnabas to come to the head of the column. Barnabas obeyed. Then they rode on at a fast trot. Very likely the camp had been warned a little while before. They had not had time to make strong preparations though, so Temple decided to do the work with a dash.

As they approached the fires they were challenged,

and Barnabas answered, giving the password and a short, clever explanation of their business; they were the half-troop that left that same morning, returning with Major Carr, who had been released to them in exchange for Major Burton. The guard, although they had been vaguely warned of some approaching danger, were completely fooled. They were expecting this half-troop to return about this same hour, and here was the half-troop, evidently by their uniforms the same men that had left that morning. Of course, the flickering light of a fire was not the best means by which to examine them. With an exultant thrill in every man's heart the little handful rode free into the arms of the evidently sleeping camp. Here around them lay a great hostile army, and they, this tiny body of horsemen, were dashing into its very midst to steal its brain away. And then, what added more to the excitement was the knowledge that perhaps the camp was not really sleeping, — it might be quietly waiting for them. Every man peered into the darkness about.

Suddenly they were challenged. Bradford answered as before. Then they were ordered to stop, but Barnabas, who was now close beside Temple, whispered to him to keep on, to make a dash for it, as they were now close to Washington's house. Clearly to stop meant ruin. They rushed on. A

voice rang out, "Halt, or we fire." The daring little company gave no reply, and then the night was shaken by the crash of fifty muskets.

A number of Temple's men were wounded and many of the horses, but, owing to the intense darkness, nothing very serious happened. Temple, who had long before got his little army into fighting form, ordered them to fire without stopping. They fired, and had better results than the rebels, for when the rebels fired they had shown themselves up clearly to their foes by the light of their muskets. The Englishmen never paused, but immediately they had fired their pieces they slung them over their backs or into their holsters and drew their swords. In a moment they were onto the waiting rebels. They too were mounted. The fight that followed in the dark was fierce and brief. Each Englishman knew what he was supposed to do. He was to act individually; to break through the rebel line and to make for Washington's house just beyond. If but a few men succeeded in getting through, and to the house, they would have a chance of seizing Washington; that is, if he was there and had not been warned.

For the first few minutes the fight was even. The English fought with more fierceness and less like machines than usual, while the rebels fought, as

always, the only way these hardy farmers knew how to fight, with all their heart. Barnabas managed to keep near to Temple most of the time in order to be ready, when his chance came, to slip away with him and in some way get to the general's house. A couple of times an opportunity presented itself to them, and Barnabas tried both times to yank Temple aside out of the fight; but in vain, the Englishman was so engrossed in his honest fighting, and in his sincere attempt to drive the enemy from the field, that all the clever schemes of Barnabas had quite slipped from his mind. The traitor captain, as was customary with him, quickly lost all patience, and was about to leave this fool Englishman to fight and win his honourable victory or his honourable defeat when suddenly he saw Temple dash forward and disappear through the rebel lines. Barnabas grabbed at the two nearest Englishmen and ordered them to follow him, shouting that their captain had gone on alone ahead of them. The soldiers followed unhesitatingly, and the rebel captain led the way by the same opening that Temple had gone by.

As he rounded a sharp rise in the ground he came abruptly upon a horseman. Barnabas drew up his horse with a jerk, showing, if it had been possible to observe him, that his guilty nerves were none too

steady. But perhaps one could hardly blame this traitor captain for being afraid in this terrible risk that he was running. He demanded,

"Who's there?" and was greatly relieved when he recognized Temple's voice.

"Don't be afraid, Bradford; I'm not one of your men."

At this moment the two English troopers came up and halted, and this only in time, for Captain Temple had just decided that the first thing to be done, now that the opportunity offered, was to punish Bradford for ever having been born; then after that he could take Washington with an easier mind. But the presence of the two troopers changed his plans. He pointed with his finger, and said,

"Look, there is a light. Is he there?"

The black shape of a building, a little darker than the night, was just visible. A faint light showed from a low, corner window of the house.

Barnabas spurred his horse forward.

"Come and see, if you're not afraid," he called back to Temple.

The three Englishmen followed him.

Halting within a stone's throw of the house they tied their horses to a couple of trees and crept forward to the window. Barnabas pressed his face against the glass in an effort to see into the room,

but it was in vain, as the occupier of the room had taken pains to hang a blanket neatly over the window. Presently the four kidnappers moved stealthily around the end of the house to the little doorway. Here again Barnabas went ahead of the others and spied out the land. The door was open, the hallway was empty and nobody seemed to be around at this moment. A light, however, came from under the door of a room across the hall; the room of the lighted window. The rebel captain was very suspicious of all this silence, and the open door; he expected to find the house in commotion over the event of a night attack. He crept back to the others and reported to Temple what he had observed. Then he said,

"If you want the man, Temple, I guess he's in that room. If you're not afraid come with me."

All four men entered the narrow hall and went cautiously towards the closed door of the lighted room. Barnabas, more crafty than the others, kept close to the wall so that, if the door was suddenly opened, he would be out of the range of light. And well he did. The kidnappers had almost reached the door when, without any warning, it was thrown wide open. Every man froze still in the position he happened to be, and stared at the man in the doorway. It was David Wharton. Temple was

crouched like a steel spring, and ready, the instant Wharton should spy him, to spring. But owing to the dimness of the light that reached the hall, and to Wharton's eyes being unused to the gloom after the brightly lighted room, the English captain was not at first discovered.

David called out as he left the room,

"You had better wait. He'll be back in a minute." Then he walked directly at Temple.

There was a moment's pause. Suddenly, when within a foot or two of the men, Wharton stopped. He peered before him and stepped a little aside to let the light fall in front of him; and at this moment Temple sprang; he managed, for the second that the light fell upon him, to keep his face in shadow by throwing one arm across it. So David did not imagine for a moment that he was struggling with his friend and old rival, Captain Temple. No sooner had Temple closed with Wharton than the other two Englishmen jumped from their concealment and dashed to their captain's aid. Barnabas, however, again proved himself more wise and cunning than the others of this expedition. He lay quietly where he was, well out of the light, and well out of the range of battle. What he calculated on to happen did happen. When David found himself set on, by what appeared to be three soldiers of

Lee's dragoon, he called for help loudly to someone in the room. And immediately help came: not in the form of Washington himself, but in the form of two young soldiers of the Continental army. These young men hesitated for a moment, puzzled to know who was fighting who, as all four of the men wore the American uniform. Quickly, however, they saw that their captain was struggling against the other three (and they noticed with certain pride that he was pretty nearly holding his own, too), and they sprang into the fray. Barnabas waited no longer. Either the room was empty or the general-in-chief was there by himself, and now, if ever, was his chance. As to how he was to kidnap a strong man single-handed he hadn't quite decided: he relied on the inspiration of the moment, or if that failed, to his allies getting the best of the fight, and coming to his aid. He slipped into the room. Everything was as he had seen it often before, except that now there seemed to be an even greater abundance of maps, papers, etc., littering the table, the fire was burning brightly, and a pen, still glistening with wet ink, lay on a partly written sheet. These details Barnabas noticed half unconsciously, but the one all-important thing was that the room was empty!

As this traitor stood just within the room of the

master whom he had come to betray, two strong emotions surged through him; one was a feeling, deep in his heart, of relief; relief that the great man, whom he feared to face, was not there: the other was the grip of bitter disappointment. Here then all in a flash he saw the failure of his cherished scheme. These two mighty emotions tore him ir their struggle for mastery. His fear and dreading had been great, as it is bound to be in the rogue who is tempted to do a really daring thing, but his avaricious spirit had been crying out for the rich reward that was to be his if he succeeded. Of course, it was this spirit which, stronger than his fears, had driven him on. For a moment he was tempted to rush to the table and grab up any promising looking document within reach, but the risk he was running was too great. Here he was standing conspicuously in the lighted room. He was clad in his rebel uniform to be sure, and if he were taken, perhaps his clever tongue could extricate him. But for the few moments that he stood there he listened carefully to the progress of the fight. By the sound that came from the narrow hallway he concluded that all hands were well engaged. Then he realized that the battle was moving away towards the hall door. He quickly blew out the two candles, and then ran from the room into the hall. The

doorway was now filled with struggling men: he thought he heard voices coming out of the dark beyond: also he realized at that moment that the tumult of the battle, a short distance back of the house, had died down. Then the attackers were being driven off, and he and these three Englishmen alone remained of the attackers. He ran to the doorway, sprang lightly onto the jumble of men, was grabbed by one leg, struggled free, and, half tumbling and half climbing, got out of the house Voices sounded close to him now, coming from be hind the building. He did not stop to help Temple nor to warn him. He had no time to spare on these nice questions of honour. At such times as the present his motto was, "Every man for himself." He made his way to where he had tied his horse as quickly as he could possibly go in the dark. Leaping into the saddle, he galloped down towards the river. He knew of an unfrequented, roundabout way that would bring him back safely to Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XII

IN WHICH THE NEW MAJOR COMES TO GRIEF

THE rest of the winter of 1778 passed quietly for those encamped with Washington at Valley Forge. In Philadelphia the gaiety continued uninterrupted by such frivolous things as war. Howe entertained as lavishly as ever, and waited with all his grand army for the famine to do his work for him in routing the rebels from Valley Forge. But that was not to be. General Washington was again proving the power of his genius by the way in which he held his discontented army together. His great tact had much to do with this. To every man he gave in turn leave of absence, sometimes lasting for a number of weeks. This eased the tension like magic. David Wharton got his leave early in the spring, while Barnabas Bradford was off duty and living with his people in Philadelphia. David went first to Philadelphia, even before going home. He made but a short visit, though, and after inviting the three Bradfords very urgently to come in a few days to

call on them all at the farm he set out on his ride home.

When he arrived he found that both Asa and his father, the Reverend Oliver, were off duty also: and so with David's home-coming the scattered family was again complete. How sweet it was especially to these home-loving farmers, Asa and David, to be at their old familiar work about the farm. And there was much to be done now that the spring was upon them: acres to be plowed; crops to be sown; fences and barns to be repaired, and so forth. Asa fell back to his old customs at once, and got up at his customary hour and did the customary things at the customary times. David went one better; he jumped out of bed generally before sunrise and was afield when the last, pale stars of morning were fading out. Though David was such a practical farmer he had somewhat of the dreamer in him too, and, even though he had been gone from home for but a matter of months, yet as he walked down this familiar lane, or put his hands again to an old familiar job, he would pause while a flood of sweet memories crowded upon him; in this way, some people would say, he lost many valuable moments. Everything about the house was bright and smiling, though, to be sure, times were hard. The only thing that cast a shadow over their

joy in the Wharton household was the failing health of Ruth. Do what they could in directing her exercise most carefully, making her sleep much, and eat plenty of butter and eggs, and drink rich milk, yet Ruth day by day showed clearer signs of weakening. When finally David went in search of a doctor and brought him out to the farm, and the doctor pronounced her condition to be serious, the whole house was cast into gloom. If she did not go South for the long, wet spring, the doctor said, she would probably not live a year. When David was at work he pondered much on this. How was Ruth to be sent South when there was no money coming in, and the poor, neglected farm was hardly able to keep those living on it in food and clothing? Finally he decided on what he must do. John Bradford had money, and if there was any way of getting some of it away from him he would get it. It was a question of Ruth's life, and the purse of his Tory friend seemed the only thing that could save it.

About four days after David had arrived home a great coach drove up to the house. All the men, even the Reverend Oliver himself, were out in the fields, and so Ruth and her mother ran out to welcome the arrivals, whoever they proved to be. The door of the coach flew open, and out jumped George

Temple, lately promoted to the rank of Major. Temple hastily saluted Mrs. Wharton and Ruth, and then turned and aided John Bradford and Anne to descend. This visit was unexpected for, as much as the Whartons hoped they would come, still they did not think that John would risk poking his nose outside the protection of the King's army. But owing to John's having lately bought a new coach he felt secure from recognition as he passed along the highway and through the village. After an exchange of greetings with the mother and daughter Mr. Bradford turned proudly to his great possession, and pointed out its beauties, and told confidently of its great cost. When the others finally turned to enter the house, the rich man insisted on accompanying his new coach to the barn to see that it was safely housed. A few minutes later he came back to the house in the company of David. The Wharton boy, for so John always referred to him, was talking somewhat faster than he could think, and consequently was talking a great deal of nonsense. But only John was capable of judging poor David for this. He did not understand how the boy's heart was all out of his control, and was simply bursting for joy at Anne's sudden presence. John could understand now only the joy that money gave, a cold, dead emotion. And so during that

short walk to the house John wondered more and more in his heart how his Anne could ever have become infatuated, as he suspected her of being, with such a stupid youth: he decided all over again that Major Temple was for Anne.

When they entered the house there were all hands at work and at play in the big kitchen: Anne was assisting Ruth with the cooking, while Temple assisted Mrs. Wharton in carrying things from the kitchen to where the table was being set in the dining-parlour. David greeted Anne very quietly, and politely, and he shook hands warmly with Temple. He liked Temple and greatly pitied him. He was embarrassed at meeting him though and he wondered why he still kept so close to the Bradfords. David never suspected that the strong, young rebel officer with whom he had fought so desperately that night in Washington's house, was the frank and courteous Englishman before him. That night Temple had barely escaped capture. David had succeeded in holding him until the soldiers, which Barnabas had heard coming, were almost upon them. Only after he had partly stunned his opponent with a blow of his fist, had Temple managed to break away. Now, in the presence of David, all this stood out vividly in his mind. He could not quite bring himself to look David straight in

the eyes, for he felt that the other must read his secret in his face. So, almost without their noticing it, the relation between David and his old friend became delicate and strained. The Englishman's continued attentions to Anne, now when he well knew how things stood between her and David, seemed to the honest American insulting, as though the mere fact that Anne had accepted him counted for nought. David was not a god, and many little things in connection with Temple, who was thoughtless and headstrong, worked more and more on his nerves. But the Englishman was quite oblivious to this; in fact he was oblivious to everything but his lost Anne. And so the few precious days slid by in the big, comfortable farm-house far from Valley Forge. Everyone was counting on at least another week of this joyous home life when an old disturbing factor reappeared and shattered their plans and dreams. They were all sitting around the great oak dinner-table one evening, after they had finished their meal, smoking and talking of little incidents of the war, when a most authoritative knocking sounded upon the front door. A sudden chill went through everybody, as though they had heard a spirit asking for entrance. They all realized that at such times as these "no news was good news," and that if anyone came to the house there were

nine chances out of ten that their mission was not one of joy. Now that the spring had come the movements of armies might be sudden and frequent.

The Reverend Oliver rose from the table hastily and went to the door. He flung it wide open and stood aside, bidding the newcomer at the same time to enter. A tall man stepped into the hall, bowed and extended his hand.

"Good evening, Mr. Wharton. You don't know me in these clothes. You've never seen Barnabas Bradford in his Continental uniform?"

"No, I didn't recognize you, Captain Bradford," returned the Reverend Oliver with a cheerful, hearty voice. "But I'm happy to see you have joined a good cause. Come into the room there."

Barnabas looked down the long hallway and could see half of the diners leaning back in their chairs at the table. A wistful smile appeared on his face, and he brushed his long fingers meditatively through his black hair.

"I'm Major Bradford now," he said slowly and simply. "Who's in there?"

"Oh! congratulations, major. You've beaten me out; ha! ha! I suppose a chaplain has no chance. But come in; come in. You know everybody I guess; just your people and Major Temple."

Barnabas frowned darkly.

"I didn't know he was here," he said as he followed Oliver into the room.

Everybody at least appeared to be glad to see Barnabas Bradford come in. The men rose, and Asa and David extended welcoming hands to him. Temple appeared to be absorbed in loosening his tight collar and did not extend his hand. Barnabas bowed low to the ladies.

The Reverend Oliver entered the room, carrying a chair which he put at the table for the new guest; then, turning to the major, he put his hand upon his shoulder and explained to the others how Barnabas had been given the high and responsible position of major in the Continental army for his estimable and loyal service to the great cause. Everyone looked terribly impressed by these words and most of all father John himself, who knew it all along. The new major bowed low and seemed very humble about it all, but David noticed an unmistakable look of triumph light his face as Barnabas glanced at Temple. The Englishman paled almost imperceptibly.

The new major sat down and talked very nicely; and all were quite proud of the reformed youth. That the reform was but skin-deep Temple saw, and David saw, but the others dutifully looked at that side only that Barnabas chose to present to them.

The good people did not read the strange expression that came into his face every now and then as he talked, and at first they did not realize that Barnabas turned his attention more and more to Temple. But they were destined to see and understand more of the loyal major's nature later in the evening. The more rum the reformed man sipped the more speedily the sheep's skin slipped from his shoulders. Temple held his peace admirably, but he had partaken of good Jamie's rum also, and was feeling very fine. David watched them with interest, for he saw clearly what was coming; and, thought he, it's just as well for Barnabas to show out in his true light, and for one or the other of them, he didn't care which, to get a good licking. The black cloud that the little rain-drops of words had been heralding burst suddenly. This is how.

Barnabas at last had succeeded in getting full control of the conversation. His ran along even more freely and his choice of topics became ever more risky; till finally, and David breathed a sigh of relief, it was the old, bad penny, showing up in its true colours. Helping himself with a fine show of good manners to rum, Barnabas introduced a subject for conversation which even he, in his saner moments, had not dared to broach.

" Parson," he said, turning his hard, crafty look-

ing face to the Reverend Oliver, "tell me, what do you think of the King's soldiers who would come like dirty thieves in the night, dressed in their enemy's uniforms, to steal away their general?"

"Tut, tut, major," replied Oliver, "many strange things are done in war. But we won't discuss that now."

The major brought his fist down with very creditable force upon the table. "Now's the time, and now's the hour," cried he. "And, Parson, it *was* a sneak's job, and every Englishman that took part in it was a damned sneak."

Barnabas looked around defiantly, especially in the direction where Temple sat with his head slightly bowed and his face set and stern. A pause followed. John Bradford made two or three attempts to speak, but his indignation was so great that his words would not come; and perhaps it was just as well. Asa sat quietly as he had been sitting all evening, his thin, seasoned face unmoved. The women looked startled at this sudden outbreak; but Anne was far more affected than the others, and she had reason to be. Her terrible secret was his; she had been one of his accomplices. The horror of it swept over her with new force. Any moment he might reveal it all to David; he was sure to some day. He had already threatened to do it twice, and

the only reason why he had not was that, for the moment, it would be inconvenient for himself to have it known. Anne decided to tell David everything the first chance she found.

David seemed to feel that it was his place to call down the disturber of the peace. He tapped his fingers on the table and leaned far over towards the offender.

"See here, Barnabas, anything you've got to say against the English, keep it until you get outside. Right here in this house there's going to be none of that talk." When David was very earnest about what he was saying he raised his eyebrows very high and stared hard at the person he was talking to.

"Ha, ha! Davy, my man," replied Barnabas in a sneering voice. "One can never tell what side you'll be on next. But there are others like you: there's my little sister for instance, she swore she was on the side of the damned English, but I'll swear to God she helped the rebels once."

Barnabas had struck a true blow at last, and the result was all that he could have expected. Up jumped both David and Temple; but Temple won out. Whereas David started to speak from where he was standing, and to order Barnabas to silence, the Englishman, who had been nursing his wrath in

silence, left his place and went over to where the insulter sat. As David did not know of Anne's part in the plot to take Washington he did not see how badly her half-brother was striking her; but Temple knew: and besides, he himself had been insulted sufficiently to give him excuse to do what he intended to do. He tapped Barnabas on the shoulder and said, "If you think we English are damned, come and prove it."

"Certainly I will," cried Barnabas, springing up from the table, and instinctively gripping the hilt of his sword. But here both Asa and Oliver interfered. They both said very determinedly that there would be no fighting near this house. Also they tried to reason with them, and to point out the childishness and insanity of their trying to kill one another because their vanity had been abused. But the two Whartons soon saw the futility of reasoning. The Englishman had just been insulted, and they couldn't reason him out of that, and he intended to fight: the American had been struck many months before by that Englishman, and he intended to fight. At first Oliver said he would wash his hands of it all, but finally his sense of fair play dominated his doubts and he decided that the only right thing for him to do was to see the duel fought fairly. There was no putting it off until

the next day either; it must be fought now, light or dark.

Ten minutes later a silent, little group of men wound their way across the fields down to the apple orchard. The sky was very clear, and luckily it was one of those nights when the stars seem to lighten the world quite amply all by themselves, for there was no moon.

Oliver and David, who had decided to act as seconds, chose a space of even ground where, owing to the trees being farther apart, there was a little more light, that is, as light went that night.

The two combatants lost no time in stripping to the waist, then, as there was no advantage to be got by position, they took the places pointed out to them by their seconds. At a word from Oliver they saluted each other and crossed swords. It was a lucky thing for Barnabas that it was very dark, for he was hopelessly outclassed: the darkness, however, so handicapped all the neat work of the Englishman that for a time the fight went quite evenly. Temple had received the careful instruction that an enthusiastic officer of the English army would be apt to receive; as for Barnabas what little of the art of duelling he knew he had picked up in strange places. But instinct was a good friend to Barnabas, and so he fought well, so to speak, in-

stinctively. He gave Temple no time to attack and so get the advantage of his skill. He thrust and thrust with such amazing swiftness that the Englishman found no time to do more than protect himself. David watched this duel with keen interest. He had often read of duels and had often imagined himself fighting one. For a time it was his highest ambition, his most valued ideal. To be matching skill with skill and death for the loser, had seemed to him, when a small boy, something beyond ordinary mortals. Any famous derelict that he read about seemed to him a god. But now, grown up, he watched these two with very different feelings. They looked unreal and fairy-like to him, it is true, but that was on account of the strange faint light. Only the upper, naked parts of their bodies showed at all clearly; their swords now and then gleamed palely, but often they too were invisible, and that gave the effect of two spirits striving to deal death to one another by some invisible powers of magic. Their quick stepping to and fro, their hard breathing, and the sharp thin click of the blades, sounded strangely clear, and added to the ghostly effect.

They had been fighting six or seven minutes before Temple got the opening for which he had been looking. Barnabas made a vicious thrust at Temple's chest; the force of his stroke carried him for-

ward a little too far, and when the Englishman whipped the blade aside with all his strength Barnabas was unable to recover his balance on the instant. That one first mistake ended the fight. With his opponent's body unguarded Temple picked his spot and thrust true, running the sword through the muscles of the right shoulder. At the sudden pain Barnabas hissed through his clenched teeth; his sword dropped, he tottered, then quietly sat down upon the grass. Oliver ran to the wounded man's assistance, while David walked off a short distance with Temple, and conversed with him in low tones, while the latter slowly and thoughtfully put on his clothes.

"Lucky thing I didn't land him a little lower down, hey, Wharton?" said Temple.

"You didn't try to," David replied with conviction. "You could have, if you had tried to."

Temple drew his coat on as though he himself were the wounded one. "Maybe I could have," he got out at last in that special tone that meant, "Of *course* I could have."

David had never seen his English friend in this very constrained mood before, and he wondered if it arose from pride over his neat little victory. But afterwards when he came to know Temple better he knew that it was not so; that this mood

came over him whenever he was doing anything of great importance. It was the result of a self-conscious seriousness.

Presently Oliver called David over to help him with Barnabas, and together they bound his wounded shoulder with broad strips torn from his shirt. These bandages at least hindered the flow of blood. Then they buttoned his coat very carefully around him, helped him to his feet, and started off at a snail's pace towards the house.

They had not gone far before Temple overtook them and offered, with the best of intentions, to give a helping hand. But Barnabas wasn't feeling quite friendly enough towards his opponent to permit that. He turned on Temple, muttering something which nobody could understand, but which sounded more like a deep growl than anything else. The humble victor instantly fell out of the line of march and took up his position about ten paces behind the others. This outbreak on the part of Barnabas took David by surprise. It disgusted him. He was beginning at last to admire this man for what he thought must be his only virtue; but as that one virtue was pluck David felt he could forgive him for his many weaknesses. Since David had been near him Barnabas had not spoken a word nor let escape even a groan, but that he was suffering one

could see plainly. This then, underneath his ugly surface, thought David, was a man; perhaps yet he would learn the a b c of life and be honest. But his hopes were shattered when Barnabas growled so viciously at Temple, and during the walk to th house the wounded man swore at every jolt, and he swore at his supporters if either of them hindered him a little or pressed him forward. Soon, as a last resort, he began to mumble about revenge and to groan long painful groans. As they came within sight of the house the front door opened, and three or four people stared out into the dark and listened. Then they saw old Asa push his way out and come down along the path towards them at a quick nervous pace. As soon as he spied the little group approaching he stopped still and waited for them, and when they came up to him Barnabas was growling and swearing as hard as ever. That told the whole story. Asa asked no questions. He waited until Temple came up to him and returned to the house in his more quiet company. They walked very slowly, as Temple was explaining every detail of the fight, and just how it happened that he got in his last stroke. Consequently they reached the house quite a bit after the others. When they opened the front door there was all the household assembled in the hall. Barnabas was just disap-

pearing up-stairs aided by the faithful Oliver. John, his father, was stationed at the foot of the stairs just finishing an evidently warm oration. Barnabas punctuated his flow of words every now and then with, "I'll have him yet," evidently referring to Temple.

John slapped his huge right hand on the bannister post to lend emphasis to his words.

"And then it comes to this. You profess to be a loyal soldier to Washington and you come here and fight in the back-yard on account of some vain words, instead of giving the message that you came with. Fie! on all you young numbskulls, for you are worth nothing." He turned around and started to stride his way into the dining-room, where Temple and Asa entered. John glared at the Englishman as he passed him but said nothing. Nobody said anything. Temple was on the point of speaking several times but never did. The silence was becoming very awkward when Asa demanded,

"Why do we all stand here? Nothing has happened. He'll be all right in a day or so. You all had better come into the study and play at some games."

CHAPTER XIII

OFF TO WAR

EVERYTHING was very peaceful in the household after this night, and the Bradfords and Whartons lived together in perfect harmony. Major Temple, of course, was not there. He had left for Philadelphia the next morning. Barnabas was the culprit, but as he expressed no notion of budging for awhile, and as nobody saw their way quite clear for giving him the hint, it was for Temple to bear the weak man's load, and this load was a heavy one for him. Barnabas decided to rest in the luxury of a bed for three days and let Anne and Ruth wait upon him. This was a relief to everybody as all felt that it was better for him to be out of sight and sound just as much as possible.

The new adjustments in the household were very pleasant to David. He oftened managed to be busy about the house where Anne and Ruth were employing themselves, and at these times Ruth always did what he hoped she would do: she discovered

that there was other and more important work for her to do in another part of the house. But this state of affairs was too good to last. John, who was growing more and more determined that his daughter should marry a man of means, soon suspected what was up. He managed as cleverly as any young person could manage, and often, in fact nearly always, he happened to have something to do himself in the kitchen after Ruth had left. Then a new trouble arose when Barnabas betook his wounded self out of bed. He was always about the house and always wanting to know where David was, if he happened to lose sight of him for a moment. Anne was supposed not to talk when brother Barnabas was talking, and so the conversation ran on topics of war, while Anne bent her attention to the peeling of potatoes, etc. David always tried to be polite to Barnabas and show an interest in war while love waited on the threshold. It was the second day after the major had been up and about that he spoke to David of his mission. He had not come to this house on a picnic nor even to see his friend, Captain Wharton, but he had been sent out by Washington to warn every man then out on leave in this vicinity to report at Valley Forge within the week. He had not thought, he added in a careless way, in answer to David's inquiry, to speak of it before;

besides, he added, how could he when he was lying there in pain? and as for his having let the duel interfere with his duty, he said that affairs of honour were of first importance. He hastened to explain that to be in Valley Forge within the week of his leaving meant that they would have to start next day.

"And what about notifying the other men on the farms about here?" demanded David impatiently.

"Oh! I saw about all that as I came through the village on my way here. I ordered horsemen to be sent out in all directions." Major Bradford said this with a majestic wave of his hand, and he showed plainly that he was aware that he was a major talking to a captain. This attitude of pride, so new in Barnabas, rather amused David than angered him; it was naïve.

"Well, then, to-morrow we go if that's his orders," he said resignedly. He arose from his bench and left the kitchen. There was something more important than being with Anne and that was to see Mr. Bradford without delay and try to borrow the money for Ruth's trip South. If he must leave for Valley Forge the next day, he must lose no time in making arrangements for her to setting off immediately.

He found John in front of the house, passing up

and down on the broad walk. His hands were locked behind his back, and his shoulders were stooped and his head was bent down. He walked like a machine, keeping the exact pace, turning at precisely the same place each time and seemed to be treading in the old footmarks. David waited at one end of the path until Mr. Bradford came up to him.

When he saw David standing there his manner changed. He seemed to know in advance that the young man was going to ask a favour of him. He seemed to be thinking out what he should say even before he could have known what David had come to talk about.

"Mr. Bradford," began David, a little troubled and embarrassed, "I've been intending to ask your advice — or, at least, to — to talk to you about my sister. Ruth, you know, is not strong. The doctor says she must go South right off and escape this spring weather. I was speaking to Barnabas about it yesterday. Well — "

"Yes, yes, Davy, yes, yes," said John, rubbing his thumb and forefinger together as though he were sifting powder between them. "Let me see. Ruth is not strong and you want to borrow a little something in order that she might travel South. Hum! Yes."

David looked at him in surprise. He had been just about to mention the borrowing, but he had been doing before that what he considered a very essential thing, namely, working up to it. The father and son had been talking it over, and Barnabas had very likely given his father some of his own good advice.

"Yes, that's just it," David continued. "She *must* travel South, and you know the old farm hasn't been paying as it used to; in fact we haven't a thing laid up for a rainy day, and —"

"Come along into the study where we can talk this little business over quietly," broke in John, turning towards the front door.

David followed him into the study, wondering very much what was coming. In some vague way Mr. Bradford's manner troubled him. He had expected to be met with strict inquiries and then given vague answers and a promise; but, on the contrary, Mr. Bradford seemed to be taking his request as a business proposition. After he had settled himself quite comfortably into a big chair he spoke.

"You say the farm doesn't pay. Why don't you sell it?"

"It's already covered with debts to its full value," David answered, "through all of us men being at the war."

"Borrow a little here and there from a friend."

"All of our friends are borrowing right and left. There's no hope there. I've done my best there."

"Well, well," remarked John, wrinkling his face into a very serious expression. "Well, well, that looks very bad. Ah! — let me see; — you would put yourself under some condition, I suppose, to get this money?"

The thought "I was right" flashed through David's mind as he answered, "any possible condition. 'Tis my sister's very life."

"Any possible condition," repeated John as though absorbed in thought. "Well, I've been having a little talk over with, — at least, a little think over, — I mean to say I've been thinking it over, and I find I must impose a little condition, something very trivial, you know, and more as a matter of form than anything of a serious nature. I like form, you know; I like form." He rubbed his hands together as though he were about to carry through a big bargain and was highly pleased with himself. "I'll let you have the money, I'll send it to your mother from Philadelphia the day I return, which will be immediately. Your word shall be my security. And this is the condition that," — he paused, then finished rather hurriedly,

— "that you will not secretly, nor without my consent, marry my daughter Anne."

David did not answer. This came as a bolt out of the blue sky, and for a moment he was stunned. Not that he had ever thought of marrying secretly or without her father's consent, but such conditions as these coming from John Bradford implied more than they expressed. They showe! David all too clearly that John was against the marriage. He had suspected this before as he knew him to be more particular about the pounds, shillings and pence a man possessed than the character.

As no answer came to his conditions John turned about in his chair the better to see the other.

"Why, Mr. Bradford," David began, "I don't see — "

"Never mind. Those are the conditions, and this goes with them, that you will never tell her of my request. Now, what do you say?"

"Why, sir, I don't know. What can I say? I — "

"You refuse?" Mr. Bradford slipped his hands down on the arms of the chair and faced squarely about at David.

"Oh, no! No, no, Ruth's life must be considered first. Other things can wait. But we may have your consent some time?"

"I don't promise that," said John determinedly. "If you accept my terms, and give me your word, neither to marry Anne without my consent nor tell her of this agreement, I'll give you my word to send your mother two hundred pounds the day I reach Philadelphia, and afterwards to supply her with whatever funds your sister's health may require."

There followed a long pause. David started pacing the room, his head bowed low. John never moved. The little clock on the mantelpiece struck twelve in clear, silvery notes and there came the piercing blast of the dinner-horn, calling the men from the fields. Footsteps sounded in the hall, approaching the study door.

"I give you my word," said David finally, and they shook hands. At this moment the door was flung open, and Barnabas entered. He apologized on the plea that he did not know anybody was in the room, and then he expressed joy that his father and David had come to such a good understanding about something. David flushed with anger. He felt more and more certain that these "conditions" which he had had to accept, were of Barnabas's hatching. He made a sickly grin at the major and left the room.

During dinner everybody was silent. Mrs.

Wharton betrayed the fact that she had been weeping by her red eyes, though now her forced smiles tried to belie the fact. Asa and Oliver both looked very serious, a seriousness that bordered on grimness at times. Anne and Ruth were more busy in waiting on the table than was necessary. But of all the people there poor David was the most dejected. The whole world had suddenly become black for him and all his joy had been blotted out in one short hour. The only ray of hope that gleamed for him seemed far, far away; perhaps it shone from some strange city and out of the future after the war was ended. Anne tried to catch David's eyes to send him a message of love and help, for his evident dejection worried her, but David would not trust himself to meet her eyes. He knew that she was watching him and he kept his eyes strictly on his plate.

The meal over David called his mother aside and explained to her that he had borrowed two hundred pounds with which she must take Ruth to the Barbadoes or some warm resort the soonest possible moment. His mother naturally was curious as to how Mr. Bradford came to lend so generously of his money, but David put her off with a vague answer, and that ended it. Then the four soldiers went out to the stable to prepare their

horses for the long ride next day to Valley Forge. As David's horse happened to be in need of little attention he left the stable before the others and returned to the house. Anne was alone in the kitchen when he entered. When she looked up from her work David noticed a troubled expression in her face. He was seized with a sudden impulse to seize her, to take her into his arms and comfort her; she was his now. Then he felt there was a great barrier between them somewhere. There was something at work to keep them apart; and he realized that his fears were centred upon her father, the contemptible man that would be trying to sell his daughter for riches and a title. As these things were passing through his mind David stood staring at Anne.

"Davy, what *is* troubling you so?" demanded Anne. She threw aside her work and ran to him. She took two firm grips with her little hands in his tight coat and looked up into his face.

"Davy, boy," she pleaded, "what *is* it? What were you and father talking about in the study there? Tell me what he said."

The young soldier put his arm about her and nestled her against him. "It is nothing, little Anne," he whispered. "Your father was very

good to me. He lent me money, and now we can save Ruth's life."

"Then are you so sad just because you are leaving to-morrow? You will soon be back."

"Yes, yes, dearest. I will soon be back."

"And then, Davy," she whispered almost inaudibly, "won't we be happy?"

Unconsciously the young man drew his arms tighter and his head sank lower, as though cringing from a stinging lash.

The kitchen door was thrust open and old Asa walked in. He stared in surprise on catching sight of the young lovers but knowing well the ways of the young, he quickly recovered and went about his business right there in the kitchen as though there was nobody else in the world.

The next morning everybody was astir long before sunrise, and they sat down to a good hearty breakfast, prepared by the servant aided by Mrs. Wharton and Anne, by yellow candle-light. Before the meal was half finished, though, the sun was up and its first faint rays were slanting in through the dusty panes of the little window and drawing a wide streak across the floor. David watched the growing bar of light, as though fascinated, as it slowly crept further and further across the room, revealing ever new patterns in the vivid rag mats.

Asa got up and blew out the candles. This seemed to give the day great courage, for the bar of sunlight became stronger and the whole window brighter. Then it seemed to David that an issue was joined between the daylight and the glowing fire. He glanced over at the great open fireplace where the maid was turning the sizzling pan-cakes on the griddle, and he unconsciously prayed that the firelight would win, for he dreaded this day more than he had ever before dreaded a day. He was to bid farewell to Anne and to ride off into the wilderness with a great crushing doubt always with him.

His broodings were disturbed by the Reverend Oliver shoving his bench back from the table and going to the dresser for his book of prayer. At this all the others got up and drew back their chairs. Oliver opened his book at a place marked with a purple ribbon and, after glancing around the room to see that all were attentive, he began reading.

All listened reverently, standing with bowed heads, and when he came to the words "Let us pray," they knelt down each one at a chair. And then a wonderful thing happened. The meaning of prayer suddenly revealed itself to David. He found himself praying with all his heart and with all his soul. A thousand times he had been on his

knees before, repeating prayers with his father at home and in the church, but now, for the first time, did it mean anything vital to him. Now did he feel the Almighty presence; now did he know that he was being heard and being answered. And what a marvellous awakening it was to him! And what wonderful comfort and hope flooded through him! During the long ride that day to Valley Forge, as he pondered over the wonderful thing that had come to him, he thought of his old, boyish attitude towards prayer. He remembered how he had always reasoned that the Infinite Mind must know our needs and that all our asking would not alter his course. Now he saw the absurdity of that. He felt that every soul came into the world with its doors closed, and that only when it opened its doors by desiring and praying for good could good enter. The sorrow which he had been bearing, a dead weight, had become lightened by other shoulders.

Immediately after prayers the four men went to the stable and brought out their horses, and led them around to the front door. John Bradford was as busy as, and more important than, any of the men. He talked about war, and condemned all wars as the games of fools, but he said this war, where the King's own subjects are turned against

him and all over a cup of tea, was downright idiocy. "War," he thundered, "all arises from man's doing unto others as he would not be done by." But with all his noise John had a troubled look in his face. Perhaps his son's departure was the cause of his trouble, or perhaps he was feeling anxious about his own person during the coming drive back to Philadelphia.

A few words, a short farewell, and the four men rode off to their stern duty of toil and privation; and those that were left turned back with heavy hearts to a silent, deserted house.

CHAPTER XIV

IN WHICH NEW ENEMIES ARE FOUND AND DEALT WITH

THERE was good news waiting to lighten the hearts of all those farmer-soldiers who were leaving their homes and families and returning to the bleak camp at Valley Forge: France had entered into an alliance with the United States. The transformation that had come over the half-starved army since those soldiers, who were returning from leave of absence, had left it was indeed amazing. There was whistling and there was singing to be heard on all sides; there were stern shouts of command; men ran here and there to execute their orders the quicker. As the four newcomers rode into the midst of all this new life and animation their hearts thrilled in response. They were soon enlightened as to the causes of it; an alliance formed with France, and a French fleet coming to cooperate with the American army. Orders had come from headquarters for the whole army to be ready to move on short notice. As to where they

were to move to nobody doubted. If the French fleet could get control of the Delaware River it would be up to the Americans to get control of the British army. After the long, cruel winter of inactivity, all this excitement and promise of action was balm indeed to the dispirited farmers. On every hand the new drill, brought over from Prussia that winter by the Baron von Steuben, was being taught, nay, shouted; and snappy little squads were pacing it up and down over the soggy ground. It was not very long before Barnabas and David and old Asa himself were drilling and shouting to equal any of them. These three, being officers, had been instructed in the new drill, when first it had been introduced, and so they were now competent teachers.

But this new life was running at too high a pitch to last. A month passed and the order for a general advance never came. Gradually the excitement subsided: there was not so much hilarity in the singing, and the words of command were not shouted in quite such stentorian voices. But the preparations continued with unabated energy, and every man knew that they were on the eve of some great work. And evidently things were moving again in Philadelphia after their long, winter sleep. Burgoyne returned to England. Shortly after this,

in May, came the news that Sir William Howe was giving up the command of the British forces in America, and would shortly return to his native land. Next came the news of Lee's return. This latter news caused much wrangling and arguing when the men were collected around the fires at night. The major-general's popularity had considerably dwindled since his capture, until now his critics and admirers were pretty evenly divided. Some sage observers held that Lee would be the ruin of the Great Cause yet, while others held that, after their much loved commander-in-chief himself, Lee was the life of the American army. They were very much inclined to argue as to who would be the most likely man in England to succeed Sir William; but here they found difficulties, as not one man of them in a hundred knew anything about the men of England.

All these bits of gossip however were swept from their minds when one day a horseman galloped into camp with the dread news that the Mohawks were again busy killing and burning. This was news that struck at every man's heart. They all had left homes and dear ones off there in one or another part of the great wilderness. No man could reassure himself with the thought that at any rate the Indians were not near *his* home. No home

was safe nor out of range. To-day some isolated farmstead would be blotted from the world, a few days of silence, then the painted bands would slip from behind the trees on a sunny afternoon, surround a quiet, prosperous home, and another nest of the hated "whites" would be trodden into the ground.

From end to end the camp was abuzz with indignation. Such fierce protest arose on every side that, at one time, there was danger of some, who had homes in the close vicinity where the last outrage had been committed, taking things into their own hands and clearing off to fight the Indians. Indignation blazed even fiercer when it was learned that certain New York Tories were enlisted in the ranks of the redskins. But Washington, although giving ear to a thousand other things at that moment, was not deaf to this new trouble. He, in his own way, was as enraged as any. The farmers argued that something could be done; that the army was lying idle all these weeks. Why didn't the general do something? they demanded of one another. And the general was doing something, but even this matter required time and careful consideration. He could not spare a man in the fight which he counted on to take place in the near future with the British force in Phila-

delphia. The expedition must go and return in time to fight.

Washington paced his small room up and down, up and down; and every minute or so he studied a large, detail map that lay spread out upon his table. This was in the early evening, but it was quite dark in the little room, for the one candle which the general held so closely over the map gave a poor light indeed. At times he grew impatient. He would set the heavy brass candlestick down off the table with a quick decisive movement, and then he would sit back in his chair and think, rapping the deal table the while with his knuckles. Finally he rang a bell, and an orderly entered.

"You know where to find Captain Wharton, do you not? Well, I would like to see him as soon as possible."

The orderly saluted and went out. About ten minutes later the door opened and a young officer entered and stood at attention before the general.

"Good evening, captain. Take that bench there. I want to have a few minutes' talk with you."

David took the bench indicated, near the great fireplace, and waited for the general to speak. Washington sat still for a number of minutes without speaking, his head slightly bowed. This time impressed itself ineffaceably upon the young man's

mind. Here he was waiting while the minutes sped by and something, what great scheme he knew not, was being planned for him by this master mind. The great Washington himself, the eye and brain of the American nation, was here before him. He watched the bowed head cut in clear outline against the candle-light. He marvelled at the high domed forehead, the strong nose, and the square, firm jaw. His instinct told him, and his heart told him, that this was the face of a man. The very loftiness of the inmate threw into contrast the meanness of his surroundings, in one sense; but in another way it made the barren closet-room look noble. David had never realized until now just how much the general's headquarters lacked all luxuries and most necessities. The room was cold, and the small fire puffed more smoke into the atmosphere than heat. Its bark was very loud indeed for such a little fire, but the promised bite never came. The table was of the plainest deals spiked together; and evidently candles were scarce.

The young captain had just reached this far in his observations when Washington looked up.

"Do you know anything about Gates?" he demanded.

David was so surprised by this question that he was at a loss how to answer. Finally he said,

"Only what the general gossip about camp says, sir; nothing definite."

The general thrust his right hand out upon the map which lay in front of him and tapped a spot with his finger.

"Do you know this section of the country at all? It is not very far from here."

David went to the table and looked closely at the section of the map indicated.

"Yes, sir," he answered. "I've gone through that part of the country once by canoe when travelling to Moose Head. I know it pretty well."

Washington looked relieved and pleased. He turned about in his chair and faced his subordinate.

"Well, captain, I want you to go there again. It is about there that the Indians will be breaking out next. At any rate there's an Indian village in that vicinity that is responsible for more than the people realize. And, moreover, I have reason to believe that a number of Tories have taken to this village as their headquarters, from which they can strike out at the unprotected farms near and far. It is a small village. Take a half-troop, captain, and wipe that village out."

And so it happened that two days later twelve canoes threaded their way up a narrow river,

poking and paddling and sometimes towing their cumbersome birch-bark canoes, which had been procured from farmers and friendly Indians. Every little while the men had to disembark, unload the canoes and portage everything around some dangerous rapids or stretch of shoal water. But every man in this little army knew his business. They all had had experience in camping and handling canoes.

David paddled in the stern of the leading canoe. His bow paddler was a young man who was a native of this part of the country and knew every little trail and stream. The canoe was laden with a large box, in which was carried food, such as Indian meal, smoked meats and vegetables, and some heavy brass cooking utensils; besides the box was a small roll of blankets, two muskets and an axe.

As evening approached, David and his companion kept a sharp lookout for a high piece of ground suitable for camping on. Just before dark came on they spied a trickling spring, and just above it the ground rose to a beautiful dry plateau just large enough to hold the twelve canoes comfortably. It was a long, tedious job starting a fire with the flint and steel, but finally one was made; three others were started with blazing brands and

immediately the brass pots were suspended over them by means of stakes, one end of which was driven into the ground. At all these fires they cooked about the same things, namely, potatoes, or other vegetables, to be eaten with the smoked bacon or any game they succeeded in procuring during the day; and a big pot of coffee. The coffee, I may add, was made from dry rye and chestnuts; but this concoction was very agreeable to the hungry voyagers. Their natural craving for sweet things was satisfied by molasses and quantities of maple sugar. As they were to be up and off before daybreak all turned in very early. "Turning in" consisted in rolling c self up in a heavy blanket or two and crawling under an overturned canoe. Two men slept under each canoe, their heads toward the middle bar. This accounted for but twenty-four of the half-troop; the remaining six however rolled themselves up in their blankets close to the fires and slept quite as soundly as any. Two men at a time took watch, each couple keeping guard for an hour.

Dawn found them toiling slowly up-stream. The high-pitched click of the spruce poles, striking the strong bed of the river, sounded very loud in this confined way between the tall crowding woods. The men looked picturesque as they toiled, some

clad in red baize jackets, some in green; some wore the coat of the Continentals with leather breeches. They all wore long Indian moccasins. One moment they were in the canoes heaving on their poles, the next moment they were out in the water dragging their craft up against the roaring torrent. Where it was possible for a man to walk in the woods, following the course of the stream, two or three always did so. This precaution was taken for fear of a sudden attack from Indians. One or two men walked in the woods on each side of the stream, well in advance of the party.

About noon of the third day they entered the locality where the Indians were supposed to be. Deeming it far from safe to go any further while it was daylight, David ordered camp to be made. He told his men that there was night work at hand, and that they had better eat heartily of cold food, as no fires could be lit, and take plenty of rest. They were to attack the village, if they themselves were not attacked before, immediately it was dark. The captain picked out three of the most skilful scouts, men as apt and cunning in Indian ways as the Indian himself, and sent them ahead to find out anything they could about the enemy. But the facts that were wanted most particularly were whether or no the Indians knew that a force had

come against them, and about how many fighters there were all told in the village. One of the scouts sent out was the young bow paddler of the captain's canoe.

The hardy farmer-soldiers waited through the long afternoon, restless and eager to be off. Some tried to sleep, but most of them sat still and watched the shadow patterns play monotonously over the brown floor of the forest and listened. These men who knew how to fight so hard for the liberty of their country, knew how to fight much harder for the lives of their people. Many reloaded their muskets and exchanged the ball for a handful of buckshot; something calculated to do more damage when fired into a mass of men than a single ball.

Late in the afternoon two of the scouts returned. They had learned little, having found it impossible to get within seeing or hearing distance of the village. There were fresh signs of Indians everywhere, and very likely all the warriors were at home, either just about to set out on a bloody expedition or had just returned from one. God grant it be not the latter, prayed they, but that they would be in time to save some innocent lives.

It was getting dark, and the young man in whom they now put their only hopes of getting informa-

tion had not returned. If he had been captured their case was serious, as the Indians could attack them where and when they chose. David became very anxious. He debated with himself whether, under the circumstances, it would be better to stay where they were, all night if need be, until the lad returned, for here they could easily defend themselves if attacked; or whether it would not be wiser to push ahead immediately on the chance of even yet taking the Indians by surprise. He had just decided that the men would not stand for any all night delay, and that it was better to attack the village as quickly as they could, when he was startled by the snapping of a twig close at hand. He glanced up, and then from behind a tree peered the beady eyes of an Indian. David was too startled for a moment to move. He felt, rather than thought, that they were surrounded, that this one had betrayed himself intentionally, and that at any instant a volley would roar out, dropping them to a man. Without turning, he shouted a warning to his men. At this noise, the Indian who had been as still as a statue since David spied him, jerked his head from side to side, then turned about, holding carefully to the tree the while, and finally started off back into the woods with a half-running, half-walking gait.

The soldiers rushed to their captain and stood about him, their muskets ready. As nothing seemed to come of it all, David presently turned to them and described the strange actions of the Mohawk whom he had caught spying on them. When he had told of the way in which the Indian had walked, some one spoke the one word "drunk." This was the most likely explanation, and their hope went out like a snuffed candle. If that were true then they had come too late. The Indian revels after his work is done and not before. Somewhere a farm, or perhaps a whole settlement, was in smouldering ruins.

There was no holding the men back now even if their captain had wanted to. To look at these fellows one would think they had just received news that their own homes had been burned; their own people killed. Their faces were hard and set, and they did the few things they had to do before setting off with what might be termed a terrible determination.

At a word from their commander the little body of Continentals jumped eagerly into line, each man giving a last, hasty touch here and there over his pockets, etc., to make sure he had everything, such as powder, balls and knife. When every man was accounted for David started at a fast stride through

the woods; the others followed in single file. He knew that the village was on the banks of the stream, and so his best guide was the watercourse itself. He was not sure of the distance but believed it to be about two miles. If only the poor young fellow who had not returned were with them now, he thought.

On they passed; now, when the more opened woods allowed, breaking into a trot, now slowly crawling, crouching low beneath the dense branches. At times they lost the stream and had to circle far to the left in order to pick it up again, though for most of its course the waters advertised themselves by their thin, hollow roar. The moccasined feet of these expert trailers gave little warning of their presence; the ground was soft and springy, and instinctively their feet refused to tread on sticks or twigs, the betrayers of the clumsy trailer.

They had been going about twenty minutes, when they suddenly came out on to a wide, well-beaten track, running in their direction along the course of the stream. This they followed, though now moving ahead more cautiously. It was on account of their silent moving that David was able to hear the pat, pat of running feet coming towards him down the trail. He instantly drew aside close in against the black trunks of the trees, whispering

a command to the man nearest him to do the same. In a moment the path was clear. The runner drew near, and now other footfalls could be heard close behind the first. David stood ready with his knife to spring on to the runner if it proved to be an Indian. The man reached the spot where Wharton was concealed, — and slipped by, making a harsh gasping sound as he passed; no man moved. As he passed them they recognized the missing scout. Fifty feet behind him came his pursuers, two fleet Mohawks running lightly, and swiftly overhauling him.

David let the first one pass; his men could deal with him. But when the second Indian came within reach the young captain leaped upon him and threw him to the ground. There was no exchange of words; David knew that a fight with an Indian had but one ending, — death for one of them. There was no such thing as quarter, and mercy was unknown to the Indian. The savage was taken completely by surprise; he crumpled under the weight of his assailant; but, as he fell, he struck with his knife instinctively. David had always had a horror of anything that seemed like treachery, and he loathed the job he had to do now, but all this feeling vanished like a vision when he felt the keen sting of the knife in his side. He thrust twice like

lightning with his short skinning knife; and his thrusts went home. Meanwhile most of the others had been dealing with savage number one, and, in their excitement and desire to do their work thoroughly, they had given no thought to their captain. A number of them had received wounds, for the first Indian had had time to draw his knife, having been warned of danger by David's attack. Also the men had crowded around him, handicapping each other hopelessly. The young scout had come in for his share of excitement, too. He naturally had mistaken the dark figures that had pounced out after him as he thought, to be Indians. He made one wild slash at the man nearest him and fell absolutely exhausted to the ground. Luckily the man nearest him was not near enough, and so no harm was done.

As soon as the rescued lad was able to speak, David, whose wound proved to be very slight, inquired of him the best direction in which to come on to the village. The lad warned him that this path was always guarded, that they would have to ford the stream and strike the village from the other direction. He also told them in short broken sentences that the whole village, about sixty Indians and seven white men all told, were assembled and were dancing and drinking around two

great fires. On every side, he concluded, were unmistakable signs of their devil's work, the accomplishment of which they were now celebrating. Even this hardy lad, inured to the life of peril and bloodshed, wept as he told of what he had seen; "the pity of it, the horror of it, oh, the cruelty," he raved. He begged them to hurry, it was but a short two miles, run, run, he pleaded. The grim farmers laid the youth gently, even reverently, on to a bed of soft moss close to the water. His words had little meaning, they thought the lad was half delirious, for he was over-tired and they found an open wound in his head; but for all that his words went to their hearts and added to the fire that was raging there.

They slid off into the night leaving the boy talking quietly to himself. They forded the stream and followed up along the bank as before. Presently, a puff of wind blowing in their direction, brought a weird sound of human voices high-pitched and still far off. They pressed on, every now and then forgetting caution and breaking into a scrambling run. Sixty Indians in all, David considered, meant about twenty warriors, perhaps thirty at most, and then there were seven white men who would be the most desperate fighters of all. Success was a very doubtful thing with the sides so

evenly matched; certainty lay only in their managing to take them by surprise.

The sounds that arose from that village became stranger and more terrible the nearer they got. There was music of some sort and shrieks; in short, all the unheard-of noise of the old Indian battle orgy. Soon they could see the faint glow of their fires above the tree-tops.

Crawling that last hundred yards or so up to the edge of the firelit clearing was an experience perhaps more thrilling and more to be remembered than the actual fighting that followed The reddish yellow glare of the great fires shot down in long lanes of light through the dark woods, between the black trunks. Twice as they crept with infinite care, lest even a twig should crack, they came on to the bodies of sleeping Indians; but as they seemed to be very securely asleep, with no danger of waking for many an hour, they deemed it unnecessary to kill them. On they crept even more carefully as they approached the edge of the woods. They were spread out over a space of about a hundred feet. This enabled them to reach the clearing all at the same time, and they were close enough together to make a volley most effective. No guard was posted on the outskirts of the village as David had feared might be the case. The well disciplined Continen-

tals lay down on their stomachs at the edge of the wood, their muskets thrust in front of them, and watched the wild spectacle. Many of them had often watched this thing before, but never with so much lust for vengeance in their hearts as now. The painted Mohawks danced, if their contortions could be called dancing, about the fires, while a short distance back sat an interested group of onlookers. Among these onlookers the farmers spied the fine gentlemen that had joined their cause with these savages, to slaughter women and children and plunder homes.

Captain Wharton made the signals agreed upon, and every man stood up in his place back in the shadow of the woods. They raised their muskets, each man carefully picking out his legitimate prey, the savage nearest him, and they aimed low at the waistband. For one second more the dancing continued, the picture continued, for one second only, then —

The captain shouted, "Fire!" and thirty muskets crashed together.

For a moment, the noise of the orgy having suddenly stopped, all was silent. But this silence was shattered as suddenly as the picture. The shrieks of the wounded were more horrible than those of the revellers; the screams of the squaws and chil-

dren, who knew not in which direction to flee, and louder than all, the shouts of the farmers as they broke from the cover of the woods to avenge their butchered people.

The scanty handful of warriors that survived that terrible volley held their ground, grabbing up what weapons they could find, until the women and children had time to flee into the woods, then they fled after them. The village lay deserted.

After putting the wounded out of their miseries, David directed their attention to the wigwams, which stood in a rough half-circle about the clearing. The fires were beginning to die down now, and the fitful half-light which they threw over the scene gave a ghostly touch to everything; the dead men that lay sprawled in grotesque attitudes over the ground appeared to move and twist as the black shadows leaped about them; the pointed wigwams, which one instant were so dim that one could hardly discern them against the black woods behind, the next instant stood out in a strange pallor as the firelight played over the birch-bark. Whenever a flame sprang into life the tiny doors of the wigwams seemed to grin and gape at the intruders as though daring them to enter.

The captain grabbed up a burning brand from the fire and started for the nearest structure. He

ordered five of his men to do the same, while the others spread themselves out in every direction to keep guard. A number of warriors had escaped, and, although armed only with the knives and tomahawks, which they had used in their dancing, they could be counted on to do some damage yet.

As David put his light to the bark of a wigwam a tomahawk pierced the wall of bark close to his head. Soon the entire encampment was ablaze. The angry red flames shot up through heavy black smoke, and in a few seconds after it was lit the whole birch-bark structure was a blazing torch. The soldiers dared not stand in this bright light, an easy mark for the concealed red-skins, so they backed off towards the far end of the clearing.

It was now that they noticed for the first time the heartrending evidences of the work that these savages had accomplished. Now the words of the wounded boy sounded again in their ears. Here were the bloody scalps of women and children, and here the mangled forms of those who had been captured and tortured. Great sacks of meal were piled high, and four horses were tethered to a tree. Every conceivable article of the white man's homestead was to be seen.

Two soldiers were struck down as they walked, one killed and the other seriously wounded. Whar-

ton ordered the men to make a rapid search for any living captives. Nothing more was found, and as it was hopeless to try to destroy all the Indians' grain, etc., he ordered them to retreat into the cover of the woods. Again, and as suddenly as before, the picture had changed. No living person was in sight. In place of the beautiful, fairy-like wigwams there were now glowing masses of coals; the central fires were now burning low and so the blackness of night seemed to be creeping out of the woods and laying soft, damp fingers over the light, until only here and there a faint scar of red glowed out between. There was absolute silence. As David, the last to leave the clearing, entered the woods, he turned a grim face towards the ruins; and he thought what a merciful thing it was that the night hid such sights even for a little while.

Their going was much as their coming; poling the canoes through rapids by day, and sleeping under the canoes by night. One difference however there was. The Indians, how many they never knew, pursued them relentlessly day and night, never losing an opportunity to do them injury. But as they were now running with the current one man could, as a rule, manage a canoe by himself, so they were able to keep a strong guard on both sides of the stream. During the two and a half

days they were returning one middle-aged farmer was killed as he was plodding along in advance of the others. Three others were slightly wounded at different times.

The price that this little army of sturdy farmers had paid in killed and wounded was not over great, considering the good work they had done. After this exploit David Wharton became a major.

CHAPTER XV

THE WASHINGTON - CLINTON RACE

THE longed-for move had at last come. Sir Henry Clinton, now the commander-in-chief of the British forces in America, had found it necessary to evacuate Philadelphia; and without any delay Washington had entered and taken possession of the city. This occurred on June 18th, 1778. Now life was quite different for the loyal Continentals that had suffered so long at Valley Forge with their great commander. Of course they did not, as the British officers had done, develop gout whilst the rank and file became plump and short of wind. It was far different with the American soldiers; Washington saw to that. They both eat and slept well, but not luxuriously. They had lots of time, for the moment, but the officers saw to it that there was no time to spare. The soldiers were drilled and exercised as rigorously as ever, and they had always to be prepared to march from the city at a moment's notice. Washington watched the British

commander as an eagle watched its intended prey. Move the British must, and that before very long. The American army waited. News kept ever arriving that the French fleet was nearing the coast, that it would arrive any day. But the news seemed to travel much faster than great French ships. The coming of the fleet would be the most popular topic of conversation for many days and nights, then it would die down only to be renewed by some fresh news, until finally the subject was dropped altogether and no news could bring it to life again. When at last in July the fleet did arrive at Sandy Hook, only to find that it was impossible to cross the bar and enter the harbour, the impatience of the practical soldiers knew no bounds.

The two majors, Wharton and Bradford, saw little of each other during the short time that the American army occupied Philadelphia. They each had more work than they could attend to, and besides this, their different regiments were quartered far apart. Colonel Gibbon, in whose estimation the young major was ever and steadily rising, was encamped on the outskirts of the city and, as it so happened, not far from the large house of John Bradford, Esquire. David often caught a glimpse of the house through the trees, and he ached and longed for the opportunity to call on Anne. But

the opportunity was slow in coming. He had to oversee a dozen things at once and to keep his eyes everywhere to see that nothing was amiss.

At last he saw a spare hour ahead of him. He cleaned his clothes as best he could, which is not to say very much, and walked down the old, familiar street towards the Bradford house. It had been a long time since he had spoken any fair words, and he feared greatly that the rough living of the last few months had taken all his polish off. He debated with himself as to how he should present himself before this dainty queen of the rich mansion. Never before, as in these trembling moments, had he so felt her great and overpowering superiority and his own mean insignificance. That she, this beauty of society, had promised herself to him seemed an impossibility and an illusion. Yet love is stronger than fear; stronger even than the fear of the youth when face to face with his lady. David moved to the outer edge of the sidewalk so as to catch a glimpse of the gates and fence in front of the house. They looked wonderfully imposing, and so added to his timidity. As he approached them he reasoned desperately with himself that a soldier should be unmoved and calm under all circumstances. But all in vain. He tried to picture his beloved commander, the masterly Washington, in

his place. No help. When he reached the gates he forgot to reason at all. Without looking up at the house, he tried the latch of the small side gate. It refused to budge though he put both hands to it and finally his shoulder to the gate. In consternation he stepped back and viewed the house, and a melancholy sight it was; every blind was drawn, the lower windows and the front doors were boarded up and the whole place was deserted and dead. This was a blow indeed for the young lover. In his anxiety to see Anne it had quite slipped his mind that there was a war; that the Bradfords had thrown in their lot with the British and, in consequence, had to flee with the British when they had started for New York overland. As he stood there gazing up at the lifeless windows he wondered where Anne was at that moment; what hardships she must be enduring in camp life, for which she was so unsuited. For a moment the pity of it all overwhelmed him; that so many good, honest people, who aided neither one side nor the other, but only wished to live peacefully and unmolested, young people and old people, should be forced to flee from their homes leaving all, and to follow an army for protection. And those Tories that remained in the city were likely to be treated by the now victorious rebel citizens even as the rebels had

been treated by the Tories before. Not everyone was as shrewd as old John Bradford, either, in keeping a hold on both sides, as he did, in the persons of Major Temple and Major Wharton, so that when the time came he could cleave to the victorious party. He was fleeing now, it is true, but it still seemed to him that the British were certain to be victorious, and so he continued to strongly favour the Englishman Temple for his daughter Anne.

When the order came for a general advance no time was lost. It quickly spread throughout the army that the British were fleeing for New York and that they, the Continentals, were expected to overtake and deal them a blow from which they could never recover. A battle, a glorious full-blooded battle at last! What magic had broken the spell of the long, dead winter, and set everything in motion again, the soldiers wondered; and few of them realised that that magic was none other than the Bourbon fleet.

The columns, marching four abreast, swung out of the city and along the country roads at a great pace. The transport wagons sank deeply every here and there into the soft ground, and the gun-carriages fared none the better, for the roads were badly cut up by the passing of the British troopers so shortly before. But every obstacle faded

away before the great good spirits of the rebel soldiers. They sang as they marched, they sang as they put their shoulders to the big gun wheels. This, chasing the enemy, was their idea of war, and quite different from the torturing inactivity which they had suffered at Valley Forge.

David was kept busy beside a number of gun-carriages, directing their handling over the rutted roads, even now and then putting a shoulder to a wheel himself. The lot of Barnabas was more exciting. Famous for his shrewdness and cunning, he had been sent ahead to explore the country and spy out the land. He galloped far in advance of the main body of troops at the head of sixty dragoons. But throughout the long afternoon no Britisher showed himself, and so Barnabas walked his horses and gave himself up to thought. The major had not been idle since the failure of his plot to betray Washington into the hands of the English. Other plots no less daring and wicked quickly presented themselves to his vicious mind. At times it looked as though it would be to his advantage to return to his allegiance with the enemy. He saw one opening or two for reaping rich rewards by so doing, for he knew how well a major, learned in all the ins and outs of the rebel army, would be prized by the enemy; and he felt certain that he

could take full advantage of an opening when it was presented to him. But the rebel army gave him openings too, and it was finally in the rebel forces that he decided to work. A great and far-reaching scheme was hatching, and it was in the crafty brain of Barnabas that it was so well nourished. It was this scheme now that the major was contemplating, and he rejoiced in himself to think of what great things would be his if all turned out well. Ever since the return of Major-General Lee to the Continental army Barnabas Bradford had been on intimate terms with him. He was well aware of Lee's unfriendly attitude towards the commander-in-chief, and he quickly saw that here was the most fruitful soil to work with; but because these strained relations between the commanders was an open secret throughout the army, even throughout the whole country, Barnabas took care not to be seen too much in Lee's company. But their plans had matured nevertheless, and now as the major rode along this afternoon at the head of his troopers he had the satisfaction of knowing that all was ready. They were biding their time.

Presently the dreaming major stirred himself about his duty. The day was nearing the close and he had not yet accomplished the work on which he had come. He told off six horsemen to ride on

ahead to see if there was any very good ground for the army to camp on that night. He sent a horseman back to report all the valuable information, which he had invented, to the army with orders to return as quickly as possible. The major busied himself in riding over the fields and woods on both sides of the road, trying to decide whether or no this part of the country was suitable for the night's camping-ground for the fifteen thousand Americans. Fire-wood there was in abundance, also the ground was firm and moderately dry, but he failed to find water of any kind. At this he became terribly annoyed. It was already time for the army to be encamping for the night; at every rise and bend in the road the officers must be expecting to find the place selected and the fires already started; then Barnabas grinned as he thought how hot the poor officers and men must be getting at never arriving: how they must be cursing him. Swinging around in his saddle Major Bradford ordered his dragoons to get lively and find water, if there was any in the land, before the army came up. Suddenly, as he realized the awkward position into which he had got himself by his dilly-dallying, he quite lost all patience and temper and fumed and swore at his already distant dragoons, as though they were culpable for his negligence. After a few

minutes two men rode in and reported water in a little valley to the west, a fair sized stream. Thereupon he set the soldiers to work, as they returned from their search, doing all that lay in their power towards making the spot chosen ready to receive the army. Three fires were started after about twenty minutes of honest effort and from these three fires dozens of others were started. Even Barnabas, dull and blind as he was to beauty, could not help but admire the fairy-like effect of these many brilliant little lights dotting the dark evening landscape; he noticed the beautiful contrast between the half-light of the summer evening and the sharp brilliancy of the growing flames. But he did not waste much time in contemplating beauty; his, he boasted, was the life of activity; means to ends, was his motto. He struck his horse a smart blow with his gloved hand and started off over the fields, giving directions to each group of soldiers as he passed. He often was at a loss as to how a certain thing should be done, but he always managed to conceal his want of knowledge by being wisely vague, so that the men would generally think that their major was a very proficient man.

About dark the dragoons who had been sent in to report, returned and informed Barnabas that the army was approaching and that General Lee com-

manded Major Bradford to choose and prepare the camping-ground instantly. At this Barnabas swore and said that the camping-ground had been ready for the last hour and that he was tired waiting.

Ten minutes later the great ponderous machine began crawling into camp, 'midst the crashing and banging of heavy vehicles, the snapping of whips and the shouting of commands. The first to arrive was the advance under Lee. Barnabas was on hand to salute the general as he rode up and the two conversed a moment in low tones, then the major rode off to his own division.

In an incredibly short space of time after the arrival of the army silence reigned over the whole camp. Not a moment had been lost. The outposts had been placed; the pickets stationed; fifteen thousand dinners eaten; and almost fifteen thousand men rolled in their blankets and gone to sleep: and now as the dark hours crept by the sentinels paced machine-like to and fro. This highly trained army was a mechanical thing of minute precision. It marched, ate and slept in perfect obedience to law, and no motion was made that was not necessary. A great mind was the life of it, a master mind that instilled into every man that vital thing, faith, without which an army, no matter how well drilled and mighty to look upon, is a dead thing. Washington



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ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2

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inspired perfect confidence in every soldier; and this confidence, given freedom to play through the wonderful discipline taught the army by Von Steuben, made the army the force it proved to be.

In the morning the columns were winding along the roads by daybreak. They were being hard driven by their officers it is true, and some few soldiers grumbled. But now they were well fed and could stand it; and besides all these hardships were leading to something; they were seeking to overtake an army, one as large as their own. Day by day the excitement grew, and the grumbling died away. In the place of discontent there sprang up such an eagerness as was seldom shown in a race before, — this was a race between armies, and on the result seemed to hang the fate of nations. Every soldier grew greedy of the moments; it seemed a crime to be sleeping and the race still in the running; they became careless about their eating and always wanted to be off. Nothing was spoken of in camp but the fleeing army ahead of them. New York was its goal, but it must never arrive there, at least not until the Continentals had dealt with it.

Barnabas Bradford was not the least excited of those in camp, and not the least eager to overtake the British. When travelling along the country roads he invariably lost his temper if a gun-carriage

stuck for an instant in the mud. He urged the soldiers to step more lively. What was the good of them, he demanded, if they couldn't walk faster than a lot of dressed-up toy soldiers and a bunch of old Tories. The men laughed at these outbursts of the major's, and the major always cursed them roundly for doing so. Poor old Barnabas was nearing the end of his dishonourable career as an army officer. His wicked schemes were at last to tumble in ruins about his ears and to crush him in their falling; and one more man was to learn the difficult lesson that good is law and that no man can work against this law save to his own undoing. Barnabas, who thought he was serving himself well and accumulating happiness by sacrificing other men, was more desperately unhappy than any man he sacrificed. Now as he rode beside a big gun-carriage, which, by the way, worried him dreadfully by its thumping and banging, he gloated over the prospects of a successful outcome to his plot and all the glorious life of ease which it would mean for him. But in the midst of these enjoyments the chance of failure would often thrust itself up before his eyes, and he could not reason it away. At these moments the sensuous expression of pleasure would fade from his face, leaving it hard and dead like ashes; and he would seek relief for himself by turn-

ing his attentions to the toiling men beside him and cursing them into greater activity.

Thus it went on, the excitement growing apace as they neared the hostile army. Scouting parties were sent ahead each day and these reported the British to be moving slowly, greatly encumbered, but a few miles away. The American army was wrapped in intense expectancy. Each morning when the men arose they thought this day would surely see the close of the great drama. But the close did not come as quickly as they hoped it would. The British did not intend to be overtaken in any unfavourable position, and so the ponderous red serpent crawled on day after day, as fast as it could go for New York, while the long, dim-hued serpent crawled after it.

They crawled and crawled, and long, hot day followed long, hot day until, after a week or so of this, the gray serpent sleeping less at night and crawling more, finally overtook its enemy. It was on the morning of June 28th that the American army came up to the British army at Monmouth Court-House and prepared for battle.

CHAPTER XVI

THE DAY AT MONMOUTH

It was not a very pleasant experience the fleeing day after day across country, trying to keep up with an army, as Mr. Bradford and Anne, besides the many other Tories of Philadelphia, were doing. For the young people it was not so bad, although it happened that the days between June 24th and 28th were excessively hot, but for the elderly folk, people such as Mr. Bradford, it was a more serious thing. John had been laid up for several days with gout and other ailments, the results of his unaccustomed high living whilst in the company of Sir William Howe. And now Sir William had gone, and left his guests sleepy and sore, to dance their tired bones out over the hills after a fleeing army. John grumbled and fretted through the long hot day from early morning until late night. He had left his fine house behind to be abused by the rebels; he had left his fine furniture and dishes, in fact, all his possessions, except the few things such as his silver and jewelry, which he had been able to stuff into his coach. Tem-

ple drove in the coach with Anne and her father every day, and many were the long arguments between the Tory merchant and the English officer concerning the war.

"What are we running away for?" John would demand, thumping his fist in every direction. "What are we running away for, I say? Are we beaten? Can't all you dressed-up Englishmen hold a bunch of farmers in check? God, man! here we are, scuttling across the country as though the very devil were after us. The whole British army can't even protect a man and his home." Then, after he had gotten over the worst of his rage, he would often end by saying, "Anne, girl, if we had put our trust in the farmers we'd be all right now."

Temple would always take these outbreaks very meekly, merely trying to explain to Mr. Bradford that they were not fleeing at all, but were simply travelling to New York, where they would be much better off than in Philadelphia. If the rebels came after them, why that was the rebels' own affair and not theirs. It was Temple's opinion that the Rag-Tag army was making a clever move. It was making the world think that they were chasing the British. He thought they would take care not to come too near the British, though.

Temple, in turn, became annoyed when Anne ex-

pressed her doubts as to this last thought of his. Anne felt quite sure that this Rag-Tag army meant business and would attack the moment they came up with them.

On the evening of the 27th, after a particularly long and rough day's journey, they arrived at Monmouth Court-House. Here they had the good fortune to find a small deserted farm-house, which they occupied before any other people came up. Temple put a minute's work on it and cleared it up a bit, then he left Mr. Bradford and Anne in the care of their old coachman and went to take up his duty in the army.

That night proved to be a most wretched one for everybody. The heat grew more and more oppressive, and, to add to this, the rumour reached the ears of the Tories that the rebel army was catching up, and would, in all probability, overtake them before morning. With such a possibility as this on their minds it is small wonder they could not sleep. In the morning their fears were found to be well grounded. Whilst the British slept the Americans had marched. So the servants of the King did not continue on their way that day towards New York. Instead, they threw up rough earth-works, dug deeper trenches, and marshalled their lines for battle. Nor did the rebels keep the British soldiers

waiting long at their posts. They arrived on the scene at a very creditable hour in the morning and attacked immediately. This attack, made by the American advance, was led by General Charles Lee. But this is ahead of the story.

When at daybreak the good citizens of Philadelphia, who were counting on the British army for protection against their enemies, spied the red-coated soldiers strenuously at work, erecting barricades, instead of marching on their way to New York, they were sore troubled. Were they then destined to see the horrors of war, these women and children?

In the little farm-house on the hill the fears of war as yet played no part. Her father having spent a bad night, Anne was kept too busy waiting on him to think of anything else. Perhaps at times she took a moment to wonder whether or no David Wharton was with the rebel forces coming up or not. She was bathing her father's forehead in a small room up-stairs when Temple called up to her from the yard in front. Anne ran to the window, and the major explained to her that the enemy was on them and would attack immediately. He told her he had come either to take her and Mr. Bradford away to a safer place within the lines, or to stay with them and protect them himself.

But Anne would not hear of either proposal. She insisted that they were quite safe where they were, but that his presence would betray them to the Tories, or, at least, make them more conspicuous. But the major was obstinate, and it was not until Anne had shown herself capable of becoming very stern and authoritative did he finally consent to even put himself out of sight within the house.

Hardly had the English officer disappeared behind the door when a voice called "Halt!" somewheres close by. Anne was standing in the garden at the time. Startled, she peered down through the little grove of trees in front of her. She could see nothing, but presently she heard voices, which seemed to be approaching her from the direction of the grove. She waited where she was, not knowing what else to do.

A man, an officer of the Continentals, appeared at the edge of the trees, mopping his forehead as he walked. He glanced up and caught sight of the girl standing near the house. Without saluting her in any way, but continuing to mop his forehead, he blurted out,

"My God, Miss, what a perfect hell of a day for heat!"

Then staring rudely into the girl's face the man

recognized her. "What! — why, it's Anne!" he cried.

Not until that moment had Anne realized that the rebel officer was Barnabas.

"What brings you, of all people, to this, of all places?" he demanded.

"We were following the King's army to New York, as many Loyalists are, and my father and I stopped here all night," Anne replied rather timidly. Her brother looked very fierce and mighty in his dusty uniform of an officer of the Massachusetts Line. She wondered if she and her father were safer or in greater danger by the presence of Barnabas. At that moment heavy firing broke out in the valley below them. Barnabas rushed anxiously and peered over the low wall that skirted a portion of the garden. Then he turned and called to one of his soldiers, in the little grove, to run and find out if that was the attack of General Lee's advance troop. Barnabas seemed very anxious and nervous. He fidgeted with his sword-hilt; swore roundly at apparently nothing; and finally in his impatience that his messenger did not arrive, took to striding up and down in front of the house.

Anne dared not re-enter the house lest Barnabas should follow her and find the English officer. So she stood where she had been standing when her

brother had arrived and watched him. Even this harmless act of his sister's appeared to annoy Barnabas. He jerked up his head every now and then and scowled at her, and at last he roared out, "Well, what are you looking at me for?"

Anne looked surprised and indignant, as though she had not been aware of his presence at all, and immediately turned her eyes to the scrutiny of something else. But Barnabas now took his turn in staring at her. After a few moments of this he came over to her, and was about to speak, when the messenger-soldier ran up, saluted, and said that General Lee had attacked.

At this information Barnabas moistened his lips, which had become very dry, swallowed, and stared vacantly ahead of him over Anne's head. He recalled himself with a jerk, grabbed Anne by the arm fiercely, and in his excitement fairly hissed out his words as he talked to her.

"Look 'ed here, Anne, I've got something more for you to do. Listen to me. Are you listening?" he raised his voice unconsciously. "I know all about your betraying us at the last moment when we tried to take Washington at Valley Forge. Never mind how I know, but listen. I'll let you off for that, don't be afraid of me, for I won't touch you for that, but I've got something else that only

you can help me in: only you, do you hear? and, — O God! Anne, if you fail me again! But there! it's only this: General Lee is attacking over in the valley. In a few minutes he'll sound the retreat and his men will turn back and flee in panic right through the rebel army, breaking their formation. You get word to Clinton, I don't care how or by whom, that he can send any force he likes by here, by this hill, which we've fortified, and he'll not be molested. That's all. He has been in communication with Lee and will understand. Will you do this, Anne?"

Barnabas glared down closely into her eyes, and dug his fingers deeper into her soft arm.

"Get word to Temple, if you like; he can inform Clinton."

Anne had hardly understood what he was saying all this time, she was so startled by his behaviour. Before she could answer him, Barnabas said, "If you refuse, I'll have, — the old man's in that house, isn't he? Well, I'll have him taken prisoner by the men over there, and God knows what they'll do to him."

"No, no, I'll go." Anne was thinking swiftly now. Temple must know nothing, she decided: therefore Barnabas must not enter the house and find him there. She cared not a snap for the cause

of the British, her whole heart had long ago gone over to the rebels; and the reason is not far to seek. No, she decided, Temple must know nothing, nor Sir Henry Clinton either. A plot to ruin the Continental army had been shown her; and she decided that there was but one thing for her to do. She must give warning.

As Barnabas, after warning her to make all possible speed, had started back for the grove, Anne felt safer about entering the house. Consequently she rushed in to find the cloak which she had left up-stairs in the room where Mr. Bradford was resting. She had forgotten about Temple, and so was greatly surprised and disturbed at finding him there in the room talking with her father.

Both men started speaking to her at the same time, and both were excited. The younger man, however, gave way, and Mr. Bradford exclaimed,

"We heard him, Anne, every word he said. The major will go; is going instantly. What are you taking your cloak for?"

Temple rushed over to stop her from leaving the room.

"Anne," he cried, "don't think of it. I know where the general is and will go straight to him. Leave it all to me."

At this Anne gave in; that is, she decided she must wait until after Temple had gone. She dropped her cloak back on to the chair and said, "Well, go instantly. Go now."

She was flushed and felt mean and ashamed of herself at that moment. She was conscious that Temple must just now have learned that it was she who had betrayed their secret that night; the betrayal that had resulted in their defeat at Valley Forge. Also she was conscious that even at this moment she was trying to betray them again. She was afraid that the Englishman would stop now, and she pressed him to make haste. If he were to linger there a minute he might bring up that dread subject, her work in the Valley Forge failure, and she was determined that he should not. He said nothing, but there was more painful emotion expressed in his eyes, when he looked at her as he went out, than words could express. He left the house by way of a back window.

The moment they were alone Mr. Bradford turned to Anne. "What does he mean, Anne?" he demanded. "What had you to do with Valley Forge? What? What? How did you betray them?"

Anne stood with her back to her father, looking out of the small paneless window.

"I sent David Wharton to warn Washington," she said.

"*You* did!" roared John, sitting bolt upright on the blankets where he had been lying. "How did *you* — find out that Washington was in danger? Anne, I don't understand."

But Anne had no time just then to explain to her father. She must hurry and warn Washington again now, before it was too late. She merely said, as she put on her cloak,

"Barnabas wanted me to help him in his wicked schemes, and so explained everything to me: just as he had done this time."

Mr. Bradford was in a quandary. He knew not whether he should get into a rage over his daughter's actions or should praise them. He was a conscientious man, in his way, and was always horrified by his son's wickedness, but he had not many scruples about the way a good end was obtained. That was all business, and anything short of murder seemed to him legitimate in business if a good end was to be obtained. Therefore, as the taking of Washington, by one means or another, would have meant the ending of the war, good business, he began to think that Anne had done a terrible thing in having frustrated the plans. But she had no intention of waiting for him to work himself into a pas-

sion. She said she would return very shortly and slipped from the room.

The object of his growing wrath no longer in sight John's outward show of anger quickly died away before the fear which the noise of the battle inspired in him. But he was very angry with Anne nevertheless, and was strongly resolved to have it out with her the first chance he got. Meanwhile he occupied himself by listening intently to the dread sound of fighting, which, to his trembling ears, seemed to be increasing in violence, and to be coming closer every minute. Presently he heard men running over the ground in front of the house close under his window. What if some of these rebel fellows should come up and find him there, he wondered. Exclamations of surprise, then of anger broke out from amongst the soldiers, such as "What are they doin'? Are they breaking up? God! they're runnin'! They're runnin' away!" And the old gentleman, lying up there on the floor in the little house, shook with the fever of excitement and of fear.

Not one minute after Anne had run from the house and off across the young, spring fields, Major Wharton had ridden up through the grove in front of the house, followed by a small body of horsemen. It was the exclamations of his men, as they

watched the battle below them in the valley, that Mr. Bradford heard.

Wharton saw that this hill was protected by a few small cannon, also he spied soldiers at work on the north slope, throwing up breast-works; so he decided his men had more important work to do somewhere else. He was about to order the captain to add his troop to the attack of the main army on the left wing, which seemed to be rapidly weakening, when, to his horror, the American front began to give way. He stared for a few moments, unable to believe that the retreat of General Lee's advance was anything but a ruse, resorted to in the hopes of breaking the British formation. But when the retreat turned into a veritable rout he was no longer undecided what to do. He had a commanding view of the whole situation from where he sat his horse on the crest of the hill. He saw where exactly a company or so of able horsemen thrown in on the instant could yet perhaps save the day; so, pointing out to the captain where he was to go, he sent the horsemen galloping down the fields.

The major stayed a moment longer where he was and watched the armies closely. Suddenly it flashed to his mind that perhaps Washington knew nothing of this defeat. He knew that Washington had entrusted the attack to General Lee, and that the com-

mander-in-chief had not yet come up. If Washington knew, he could yet rally the broken army. Would no one warn him? What was Lee doing all this time? The major turned his horse about and started on his mission to warn Washington. But at that moment Major Bradford appeared on the green, coming from the direction of the breastworks.

David arrested his horse.

"Does General Washington know of General Lee's retreat?" he demanded.

"Of course he knows," said Major Bradford. "I'm here to fortify this hill, to keep the British from cutting off the American retreat."

"Where's Lee, then, all this time?" David demanded excitedly.

"There he is now, trying to rally his broken troops," Barnabas pointed to a horseman riding furiously hither and thither amongst the fleeing men. "Guess he can't do it though. The day is lost for us."

"Good God," muttered David, and something welled up within him and choked further words.

"But look, man," he cried, rousing himself to the sudden dangers confronting the army, "they're coming here; a strong force, coming to take this hill. If they take this hill our whole army will be

destroyed. Quick, call up more men. Quick, I'll ride in and get 'em."

David drove his spurs into the horse, but before he could move Barnabas had seized his bridle.

"No!" he cried sharply. "I'm in command of this hill. You leave all that to me. Don't you meddle."

"But, God, man! don't you see them coming, the size of the force? You can't hold the hill against them. Send for some men, or you'll be swept from here in another minute."

"You mind your business," roared Barnabas, furious, "or I'll put you under arrest. I'm in command here and will do things my own way."

"I'll do what I damn please," answered David. "Let go the horse."

Barnabas did not let go. In a flash David had slipped out of the saddle to the ground and jumped for him. Barnabas dodged aside, and at the same time jerked the reins with all his might and yelled at the horse. The beast reared in a panic, then dashed off and disappeared amongst the trees.

For a moment David forgot himself in his fury. He drew his sword, and Barnabas, cursing him the while, was forced to defend himself. He shouted to his men in the trenches, but when he glanced in their direction he saw that the red-coated soldiers

were already upon them, and that they were attending strictly to business. No shot had been fired by either side in this little attack, and if one had looked at all closely he could have seen that nobody was being seriously wounded either. The rebel soldiers in the trenches were giving in everywhere.

Barnabas turned about while fighting so as to have his back towards the trenches, then he started running backward. David followed him a few paces, suddenly stopped, then stepped aside slipping his sword into its sheath. And Major Bradford ran to the trenches to make a show of resistance.

In another minute the hill would have been in the hands of the enemy, and the battle of Monmouth would have gone down in history as a British victory, and the great scheme of Barnabas Bradford would have yielded to its creator rich rewards. But it was not to be. The moments count everything in the winning of a battle and here the moments were valued and the battle won. Washington had received word in the nick of time. He had grasped the situation in a flash; had thrown forward his own forces; and sent out forces here and there to guard vital points; without literally a moment's loss of time.

A strong force of infantry broke through the trees and rushed out into the little clearing near the

house. A small body of artillery-men, drawing three cannon, followed. Wharton shouted to them, and pointed to where, in the trenches, Major Bradford was losing the day to the British.

The captain quickly formed his men into order, and led the charge down against the all-but-victorious English. David joined this new force and charged with them.

The struggle was short but fierce. The English soldiers had been given to understand that they would be allowed to take this hill from the enemy without any fighting. The rebels, holding the hill, had been instructed not to fire, nor even to fight hard. They had been told by their commander, Major Bradford, that their position was not worth holding, that they were to give it up. And so it took the attacking soldiers some time to realize that they were being seriously resisted. When they did, they began to fight, but they were outnumbered, and at a disadvantage as to position.

Slowly and in good order they backed away. Cheering, the Americans followed. The cannon roared at the scarlet lines from out of the grove at one side, mowing the ranks. Then the British turned and fled.

The American soldiers started to follow the enemy, but their officers sternly ordered them back

to the trenches. There they were set to worl strengthening the breast-works and lengthening th trenches at one end. David returned to the highe spot of ground near the house to see how the figh in the valley was progressing. The noise whicl had arisen to them as they fought in the trenches told him at least that the American army had no surrendered. And now a joyful sight met his gaze There was General Washington himself leading th troops into the battle; the whole army was formed and in good order: all those that had been running away a little while before were now pushing for ward in good, unbroken lines, inspired with new confidence by their great commander.

The British and American batteries mounte along the hills on both sides were thundering.

At such a sight as this, the Continental arm mended and strong again, Major Wharton brok out into wild cheers, waving his naked sword abov his head.

"We are saved! We are saved," he shouted "God bless you, Washington!"

"What is it, David? Are we winning? Oh tell me!"

David turned quickly, recognizing Anne's voic and then she was running towards him from th direction of the little grove. His mind was to

occupied to leave any room for surprise at seeing her or to wonder at her being here on this hill of battle.

"We're holding them. We're holding them," he said. "Look, come here, see!" He helped her on to the mound of earth on which he was standing. As she looked into the valley Anne was too impressed to utter a word. Here below her, spread out in all directions, lay two whole armies; and for the first time in her life she was given an idea of what a battle meant. She was not so far away from the fighting but that she could distinguish the individual men; she could see them strike and fall; she saw men smashed by the cannon-balls. During the first few moments that she looked on, the sight seemed so amazing, and even beautiful, that she did not notice the horror of it. But presently she saw that, too, and she was sickened. The beautiful, long lines of scarlet, hidden every here and there by the clouds of white smoke; the glistening of the steels in the sun, as the troops marched to the front; the deafening crash of the cannon and muskets; these thrilled, but the horrors were there too.

Anne turned from the sight, and rested for a moment on David's arm. Then she slowly climbed down from the mound of earth. But David was

not aware that she had left him, so absorbed was he in the progress of the battle.

"Look, look, the wing gives way. They run! They run!"

Out shot the major's sword a second time, and up it went over his head as he shouted and shouted his hurrahs.

The enemy's right wing had broken; then the British had given way all along the line. The Americans had pressed after them; but the British retreat was covered by their guns, so the victorious soldiers were forced to desist. Only at one side where the cannon could not play on them did the enemy run and the Americans pursue.

After he had made sure that the victory was decisive David turned to find Anne. She was walking slowly towards the house, her head bowed. He called after her, but she did not notice him, then he jumped down and ran over to her.

"Anne," he cried, "it's a complete victory. We've won everywhere. Think of it, Anne. They're beaten."

Anne looked up into his face and smiled sadly.

"Yes, Davy, and I'm glad, too. But to think that perhaps *I* did it, — and my own side!"

"What did *you* do, Anne?"

"I heard of the plot to — to sell, to ruin you

cause, Davy; the cause for which I knew you were suffering so much. I knew that General Lee would retreat at the critical moment and ruin all. I warned Washington in time."

At that moment Barnabas appeared, coming towards them from the direction of the trenches. The left side of his face was covered with blood from an ugly wound on his forehead. He repeatedly brushed his cheek with his left hand, shaking the blood each time impatiently from his fingers on to the grass.

"Then it is *you* that have saved us," cried David. "*You* more than anybody else."

"How did *she* save us?" demanded a harsh voice from behind.

They both turned to see who spoke and saw Barnabas, who was now quite close to them, for the first time.

"What did *she* do?" repeated the harsh voice. Although the voice came from Barnabas it did not seem to be his.

Before Anne could stop him David got out, "She warned Washington in time. She saved the day." This second sentence was drowned by Anne's cry of warning to David. But Barnabas already knew that the British had been defeated, and he had heard enough of what David said.

Even before David had answered his question this man coming towards them had looked more like a beast than anything human, with the blood dripping from his chin. But when David said "She warned Washington," the beast was suddenly transformed into a devil. On this great scheme of his with Lee, Barnabas had trusted all. With it he knew that he must stand or fall. It had failed. He was ruined, and would soon be an outcast. It had failed at the moment when success seemed certain. And who was responsible for this disastrous turn of affairs? When David said, "She warned Washington," Barnabas knew. He eyed her for a moment, then he muttered, "By God, I'm going to kill you!" and sprang at Anne.

David was taken so by surprise, having expected that Barnabas would be overjoyed at what his half sister had done, that although he was nearer Anne than Barnabas was, he failed to get to her quite soon enough. Barnabas grabbed her by the arm, threw her heavily to the ground, and was just drawing his sword, when David got hold of him.

Anne, when she saw Barnabas rushing at her, had pluckily tried to defend herself, had attempted to keep him off by her outstretched arms. But, as we have seen, that did little good. Barnabas was about to kill her where she lay upon the ground

when David seized him by the neck with both hands and hurled him backwards. Then David bent down to help Anne to her feet, but had to jump up instantly to defend himself, for Barnbaas was upon him with drawn sword. David drew his sword, standing where he was, to protect Anne. But the fight never occurred, for, shouting and cheering, the victorious American soldiers came running through the grove, and across the green in front of the house. Hundreds of others went dashing across the fields, jumping the trenches, and disappearing down the far side of the hill.

Barnabas was about to make a wild attack on his opponent when this shouting broke out. At that he stopped, glanced about him like a hunted animal, and was on the point of fleeing when his fury overcame his fear for a moment, and he stopped.

He fairly screamed out an oath at David, and struck so blindly that, had not David lost his balance at that moment by stepping backwards on to Anne's foot, where she lay upon the ground, he could easily have ended this man's career with a stroke. As it was, Barnabas gave him no time to take advantage of his blind recklessness.

When the first shouting soldiers broke from the little woods he appeared to think they were after

him. He aimed a parting thrust at his opponent's face, which David avoided in the nick of time by ducking his head to one side, then, still holding his naked sword in his hand, he dashed away, springing over a tumbled snake-fence that was in his path, and making off in the direction of a forest about a mile and a half away.

The excited soldiers hardly noticed the officer running so madly away from them across the fields.

David hurriedly lifted Anne in his arms and carried her into the house. Mr. Bradford, who had been too frightened to leave the house at all, but had spent his time in limping from one window to another anxiously watching the course of events, came thumping down the stairs with his cane to see what injury had been done his daughter.

David carried her up-stairs, assuring the old gentleman the while that Anne was not hurt, but needed a little rest. He left father and daughter in the room together, and went over to watch the results of the morning's battle, as far as he could see them, from the crest of the hill.

CHAPTER XVII

ON THE ROAD TO NEW YORK

In one way the battle had brought relief to the weary little group of Tories that was travelling to New York with the British army. The awful suspense was gone. The worst had happened and was over with, and now the army was moving ahead at an easier pace, with no more forced marches or night travelling. Of course the speed of an army must always be relatively slow, when travelling over bad roads with heavy lumbering wagons, and, in this instance, it had not been at all difficult for the gentlemen and ladies to keep within range of the army's protection. But they had been allowed no rest, but always had to be up and away in the morning; for was not the whole rebel army treading on their heels. This haste caused all the Tory ladies and gentlemen, but John Bradford in particular, much inconvenience. Of old, John had been an early riser, and even until recently he had always managed to be the first man

at work in the office in the morning. But since he had become a gentleman his habits had necessarily changed. All night entertainments at Sir William Howe's were not conducive to early rising; nor was the ailment, which seemed to John the stamp of the aristocrat, the gout, an asset to one's money-making ability. And so John had speedily become addicted to the more fashionable hours of rising. He greatly prided himself on his adaptability to fine customs and manners, and he held up this adaptability as proof of the blue blood, which he had always said was coursing through his veins. Anne had looked on to all these changes in her father with both amusement and anxiety. But she finally decided that these new interests could do him no harm. She had long prayed that some diversion might come into his life, and turn his attention from his sordid piling up of wealth. The diversion had come in the form of society. And Anne often reminded her father, when he was tormenting himself with business worries, that it showed a lack of good breeding to be thinking of nothing but money. John would scold her for these so-called interferences, but would generally turn his thoughts on to more genteel subjects.

Amongst those travelling with the army were the many stanch Loyalists who, although they had

frequently dined with Sir William, had yet taken time to work hard for the cause they had chosen. They were now suffering loyally for their King, and not one of them considered his lot too difficu. . Indeed, they even managed to have a great show of gaiety. Their coaches were strung out in a long line down the road, like a street of houses, and the good people went from one coach to another paying calls. And not only these ladies and gentlemen, but certain English officers, would pay their respects to the little colony each day. Needless to say, there was no banqueting or high jinks now. The fare was of the roughest, and the time taken to eat it not over long. But hearty songs around the blazing fires at night proved to be more charming than the dancing had been in the reception-rooms of Philadelphia; and the little informal visits paid from coach to coach proved to be far more entertaining than the formal calls in the city.

The Bradford coach was very popular, and often of an afternoon the spare seat would be taken up by a couple of young gentlemen, whilst other youths perched upon the two large steps at the side. John would be always very glad of the company of these young aristocrats and would converse with them on all the topics calculated to interest the fashionables. Strange as it may seem, the old gentleman

never wondered at his popularity with these men, attributing it, no doubt, to his powers of conversation. Of course the beautiful Anne was at his side. Thus most of the afternoons were passed; once in a while John's much prized acquaintances, such as a Bliss or an Allen, dropping in to see how he was faring. Major Temple continued his devotion day after day, but if he did not get to his fair one's side at an early hour, as often happened, he would arrive only to find that the young cocks had got there before him, and that no place was left in the coach. On these occasions he would take up his place dutifully alongside, sitting his horse very stiffly to be sure, and his ill-humour not improved by the suggestive grins with which the youths would greet him whenever he happened to look towards the coach. Poor Anne was not very happy. She joined in the conversation as much as politeness demanded, but no more. For the greater part of the time she sat staring out of the window into space. But if that window through which she stared happened to be the same window at which Major Temple was riding, this innocent occupation caused the young gentlemen many misgivings. Anne's mind, however, was far from the handsome English officer. She was thinking of David Wharton; she was wondering how long this ghastly war

would continue, he struggling in one part of the country, and she fleeing into another. And her heart ached every minute of the day; for was not she a rebel in all but the name? Had not she saved the rebel cause, perhaps two different times, and defeated the cause of the Tories? And here she was fed and guarded in the midst of the people she had thwarted. How cruel, she thought, were the customs and laws that denied to a woman the right to openly work and suffer, as the soldiers did, for the cause that she loved, but rather forced hers to be the hidden hand, and her doings to be in secret. At times she had a mad impulse to stand up and cry aloud to the whole army that she was a rebel and had worked as a rebel against them. For her, the days were long and monotonous to the extreme. She felt too unhappy to be interested in paying visits to the other people; she sat still in her seat until tired, then got out and walked until tired, and so on throughout the day.

But one fine morning diversion came, and it was the ever faithful major that brought it. Coming to the coach door, he tapped on the panels, and called to Anne in a whisper, for fear of waking Mr. Bradford, to come out and see what he had. Anne slipped out softly and closed the door behind her. What Temple had brought was a fine horse

saddled and bridled. The day was cool and lovel and never did Anne feel more in the spirit for ride over fields and hills, through woods an streams. She did not keep Temple long in doub as to the way she felt towards his surprise. A last a break in the long monotony had come. Sh would ride; and ride far and fast. Fairly over come with joy at the idea she sprang into the sad dle of the splendid animal which the major wa holding for her. Then she bethought herself an slipped as quickly out of the saddle to the ground and ran to the coach and disappeared within. Tem ple heard voices for a few minutes, then Ann reappeared, shot a glance of triumph at Temple and stepped up to the horse. A voice continue talking quietly to her as though she were still i the coach. The words were hardly audible to th young people without, but presently John Bradfor poked his head out around the edge of the doo night-cap and all, and raising his voice a few note said to Anne,

"But, Anne, where are you going? Remembe you can't leave the army twenty feet, or you'll b shot by some of those rebels. Do you hear, major You won't take her away. What?"

"Oh, no, sir. Have no fear. We'll have lot of room to ride within the limits of the army.

guess we stretch a good many miles along this road."

Anne smiled most reassuringly to her father and touched the whip to the horse. But even this lovely smile, which had seemed to Temple so heavenly, did not satisfy the old gentleman, who continued to grumble. But perhaps he knew Anne better than Major Temple did.

And so they set out upon their ride very early in the morning, at least an hour before the army had to march. The road was comparatively clear for the greater part of the way to the outpost. Anne led the way at a good canter; slowing down to a trot only when she was forced to the side of the road on account of the broad gun-carriages and transport wagons. Never had Anne felt so strong and free as she felt this summer morning, riding through the open country. The army had camped three nights in a particularly pretty spot in a short valley and lay stretched out right up over the crest of the two hills to the front and back. Now as Anne reached the summit of the little hill in front, and looked down into the beautiful country spread out below her, a longing gripped her to be galloping over those meadows, as careless as the wind. The narrow, pent-up life she had been living the last weeks arose before her eyes. That she, Anne

Bradford, used all her life to the broadest freedon should be cooped up now, and forced to ride di mally, day after day, like an invalid, glued to a army, afraid to leave its side, was too much to b endured. She sat her horse motionless a few mo ments, staring out over the country spread like map before her.

"George," she cried, turning to him enthusia tically, "let's go out there; way out there." Sh pointed with her whip towards a distant wood and gleaming river.

"But, dear Anne, the army ends right here front of us. There is the last outpost right dow the hill there."

Reasoning was to count little now. Anne ha thrown off her maturer spirit, and had becon again the care-free child of some years ago.

"Oh, but what do *we* care about the army? Let go." She spoke in tones half-pleading, half-com manding.

But Major Temple knew the absurdity of a English officer, clad in his scarlet uniform, tryin to take a pleasure ride through the enemy's cou try, especially when that country was literally fu of the enemy. He took great pains to let Ann know that he was not afraid, but was merely tr ing to be reasonable. He explained that all tho

farms, that they saw dotted about the country, were the homes of the rebels, and that a bright red coat would be a very conspicuous thing riding through the country, and perhaps calculated to arouse interest in all rebel gentlemen that happened to spy it.

But Anne would have none of it. His reasons were all very well, she said (she really had not listened to his reasons at all), but still she did not see anything to prevent her taking a short gallop down to the river and back; he could wait here for her, she cried, as she started the horse off in the direction of freedom.

Temple smiled as she drew on the reins. Well, he thought, at least she'll see that I am not afraid, we can afford to be fools and feed our vanity sometimes in our lives. He enjoyed the prospect of galloping under the very noses of the rebels by the side of his lady. He knew that she would be safe from any attack.

They rode down the hill, passing through the outpost camp. The soldiers were eating their breakfast when the major and his lady went by. The sentinel saluted, and stepped aside to let the riders pass. Temple looked very stern and formal, as though he were doing nothing out of the way in taking a little pleasure excursion into the enemy's country, but he felt his face growing hot, for he

knew that the soldiers were staring after them, ar wondering what in the world this mad major w up to in riding so boldly away from the army.

Temple carried no weapon whatever, havi dressed for a short ride up and down the guard roads. Now he wished very sincerely that he h filled his empty holsters.

Anne led the way, galloping faster and fast and as Temple had given by far the best horse her, he soon found himself hard pressed to ke up with her. The road was even and not too har and was shaded most of the time by leafy ma trees that lined both sides.

The first farm they passed looked quite deserte The fence in front of the house had tumbled dow the door was off its hinges and leaned up drunker at one side; and the front windows were rough boarded up. Anne gave this uninteresting place b one glance and turned her attention to the ro ahead. But the major was not so easily satisfie There was something suspicious looking about that he did not like. Nothing told him clearly th the farm was in use, but many little things seem to point to this: the long grass in front of the hou was trampled as though it had been walked ov very recently; much of the wood that lay scatter about near the kitchen door appeared to be new

cut; also Temple imagined he had heard the stamp of a horse's hoof in the barn. He said nothing of these things though to Anne, and, in fact, he quickly forgot all about them himself.

On they rode. Anne was so glad to be free again that she thought nothing of where they were going, or for how long they were to ride. It was enough that the road lay open ahead of her and a good horse was under her. Nor did Major Temple think of these things either. It would be a pity, indeed, he thought, to lessen the joy of this wonderful ride at Anne's side by worrying about the enemy. He was careful, nevertheless, to see that they kept to the main road, for he knew that the army would be passing along there during the day, and it would not have done for them to lose the army.

They came to the bridge spanning the river that Anne had looked on so longingly from the top of the hill. At the sound of the horses' hoofs on the floor of the bridge, a farmer boy, who had been fishing just out of sight at the edge of the water, jumped up on to the side of the bridge to see who was coming. At sight of the English soldier the boy turned and fled, running towards some farms across the fields. Temple smiled grimly at this.

"The lad has gone to warn his people, so that

they'll have things hot for us when we arrive," he said humourously.

"What do you mean?" Anne demanded, a little anxiety creeping into her voice for the first time. "Do you think we had better turn back?"

But now that Temple saw that Anne had begun to realize the danger he ran in coming away from the army at all, he grew even less cautious about himself than he had been before.

"It's just as you say, Anne," he replied. "If you would like to go on I'm with you."

Anne was doubtful. She did not want to stop now, just when she was entering the fairy-land that she had spied from the hill. But the sight of this farmer boy running to warn his people of Temple's presence worried her. She gazed in the direction of the farms for a few minutes, then turned and looked back to where the head lines of the British army were appearing over the crest of the hill. This last sight settled her doubts.

"Look," she cried, "there's the army. We'll be safe with it coming right behind us. And, oh! we don't want to wait for it to come up to us, with all its noise and dust. Let's go on, just slowly."

"All right," said Temple. And they went on.

They rode at a fast walk along the slightly rising road. Temple was the care-free one now. He

looked to neither right nor left, but kept up a gay chatter, to which Anne only pretended to listen. She kept glancing apprehensively towards the great farms across the fields on her left.

"There! Look!" she cried presently. "I see a man running. And there's another. What are they going to do? George, I think we had better stop." She drew in her horse.

"We'll wait and see. Come on, don't stop. We can get away easily enough if they take after us."

He glanced towards the farm and spied the two men as they were disappearing into a barn.

"They are going to get their horses, I believe," Anne said.

"Little good they'll do them then," the major remarked confidently. "We've got two of the best horses in the army. They would be lucky if they could keep in sight of our heels. Of course," he added, less confidently, "our horses have had a hard run already."

They had not gone a hundred yards when the two men reappeared mounted. They stared hard at the red-coated soldier, riding so boldly on the King's highway, and seemed to be discussing as to what they had better do. Presently they started off at a fast trot down the fields, but in the opposite direc-

tion from that in which Temple and Anne were going.

Temple drew up his horse abruptly.

"What's up now?" he demanded. "Trying to cut us off? No, my hearties, you can't do that. Come on, Anne, we'll show them what we can do."

They turned their horses about and started back on the gallop. At this the men in the fields broke into a gallop, and the race was on. Where the fields were at all even the rebel soldiers, for such they proved to be when Temple got a nearer view of them, held their own very creditably. But every here and there they had to leap a fence or slow down on account of the roughness of the ground, and so the two fugitives gained a little.

But this little was of no avail, as Temple soon realized, when he noticed how the road took a sweeping curve to the right, thus making their way long, and the cut across the fields very short.

"They're going to have the best of us, this time, little Anne, I fear," the major cried. "But there's the army not very far off. Surely they won't let us be taken. A little quicker, Anne, if you can."

By this time the two soldiers were a distance ahead of them, as the road ran, by virtue of their short cut over fields. Temple saw this with dismay,

but said nothing of it to Anne, and continued to ride, as every step was taking them nearer the army. Then a surprising thing happened. The two troopers reached the road about a quarter of a mile ahead of Anne and the Englishman and, instead of waiting for them or coming to meet them, they continued their wild ride on up the road, utterly ignoring them.

For once in his life Major Temple felt very much pleased at being ignored. He slowed his tired horse down to a walk, and watched the strange actions of the two rebels, searching his mind the while for some explanation of it all. He found none, however, until he saw them turn into the grounds of the deserted farm, which he and Anne had passed a little while before. At this his heart sank, and unconsciously he drew upon his rein and brought his horse to a standstill.

"Anne," he said, "I believe there are more of these chaps in the house there. I thought I saw —" But he forgot to finish his sentence for thinking of how they were to escape out of their plight. "By thunder! Anne, we've got to get to that army some way. What say you, shall we ride for it? Perhaps we can pass before they get out."

Anne was willing and ready, and off she started

full speed towards the enemy and the British army. The major followed at her heels.

A horseman appeared at the edge of the road in front of the farmhouse, and pointed up the road towards the great, red army, now but a mile away and shouted something at the same time. Presently he was joined by two more mounted men, then about fifteen troopers filed out and forward in line two abreast upon the road, facing in Temple's direction.

The little body of rebel soldiers had not stood there in plain view half a minute, tightening straps and arranging bundles of provisions, when a half-troop or so of redcoats broke away from the ranks of the army and started scouting down the hill after them. At this the rebel soldiers lost no time in setting off. They came clattering down the road towards Temple and Anne.

"Quick, George," cried Anne, "we must ride to the fields." And without waiting for a reply she put her horse at the wooden fence. Temple followed, as it was the only thing he could do; but he felt pretty certain that, if the rebels had any intention of taking him, his fleeing across the fields would do little good. And so it proved to be. Hardly had they got under way on the rough hillocky pasture land when a musket shot rang out.

The soldiers were not far away, and the ball furrowed the dry earth a few yards in front of Anne's horse.

"Stop, Anne," Temple cried. "It's no use our running away, and they as close as that. They could pot me next shot easily." Anne stopped and turned a rather frightened face to the Englishman. "*You* could go on, Anne, if you wanted to, for they won't harm you. You might as well come back and return to the army by way of the woods though."

Temple turned his horse, and was about to start back to where the troopers had halted upon the road, when the officer in charge neatly jumped the fence and rode up to him. Temple did not look at the officer, but fixed his eyes on the swiftly approaching body of English cavalry.

"Your sword, sir," demanded the rebel in a stern voice.

An exclamation from Anne made Temple turn suddenly toward the officer, and at that moment he and Major Wharton recognized each other. But David wasted little time in noticing the Englishman.

"What, you, Temple!" he cried in amazement. Then he spied Anne. But suddenly the pounding of the hoofs of thirty horses broke out dangerously

near. The English cavalry had just swung into view around a bend in the road.

"Anne!" David cried; but that was all. Firing broke out from the British troopers. As Major Wharton turned to join his men, Temple started to follow, but David shouted back to him, "Go free, Temple. Stop those horsemen, though, if you can." Then he dashed off, jumped the fence, and, shouting a command to his men, led the little group clattering down the road.

As the rebels started off a volley of six or seven muskets was fired on them, but as the Englishmen were yet several hundred yards away and riding fast their bullets failed to find their mark.

Temple turned to speak to Anne but, finding her staring intently down the road at the now disappearing horsemen, a pang of jealousy seized him, and he rode off towards the road without a word to her.

Sitting his horse in the middle of the road, he waited for the cavalry to come up. As they neared him he held up his right hand as a sign for them to stop, and they drew up a few yards from him.

"I was taken prisoner," he said to the officer in charge, a captain, "and released on condition that I would stop this pursuit." He grinned at the officer. "It was worth the bargain, wasn't it, cap-

tain? I'll report the case myself to your superior officer."

The captain, a short, sturdy, little fellow, made a poor attempt at hiding his ill-feelings at thus being interfered with, when on the point of winning some distinction by the routing of a rebel foraging party. He saluted somewhat abruptly and, shouting his orders with a mighty voice, swung his lines about and started them back towards the army.

By this time Anne had quite come to herself, and had joined Temple. Together they rode, a short distance to the rear of the troopers, following them back to the army, silent and dejected. The horses walked with heads held low, and little patches of foam dropped from their mouths.

CHAPTER XVIII

AT THE HOUSE OF JOHN BRADFORD

THREE years had passed, and since the battle at Monmouth the Continental army had met with little encouragement. The army had been hampered through the weakness of the government. The Continental currency had become worth nothing; the British had added victory on to victory; Georgia had been captured; Charleston taken; and the Americans routed at Camden. Then on the top of all these disasters, at this darkest moment of all the war, when even the great Washington had ceased to hope, came Arnold's treason. But the plot to betray West Point into the hands of the enemy having failed, slowly the tides of fate began to flow in the opposite direction. Although few yet realized it, the American cause was in the ascendant. The general depression was greatly relieved in the autumn of 1780 by the news of the victory at King's Mountain. The American army was recruited and reorganized; and at the beginning of the year 1781

proved its effectiveness by the defeat of the British at Cowpens. The outlook was decidedly improving for the rebels and becoming less certain for the British. For the first time during many a moon the Tories of New York discussed the situation with a note of anxiety, in place of the cock-sureness which for so long they had been displaying.

It was on the evening of October 26th that we find Mr. Bradford, Anne, Major Temple and a few of John's Tory friends seated at dinner at the rich merchant's house. The conversation, of course, was running on the war; and John was holding his customary position of critic of the British army's methods. Temple was nobly defending them, and doing a little prophesying at the same time.

"Idle fears, Mr. Bradford!" he said in answer to John's clearly expressed doubts. "Vapours. The rebellion is simply dying a natural death; the rebel army will waste away with old age. Why, Washington hasn't attempted to strike us a blow since the affair of Monmouth, more than three years ago."

"Neither have we struck him one," roared John, "and he has contrived to keep us penned up in New York all these three years."

"And what better place could we have in this confounded country?"

"But, sir, I ask again, what's to become of us Loyalists if Washington finishes with Cornwallis there in the South before Sir Henry Clinton gets to his lordship's aid? America will be lost to England."

The major slapped the table in his excitement. "'Twill never happen!" he cried. "England beaten! 'Tisn't to be conceived. Never fear, sir, my Lord Cornwallis is a match for this American Fabius. He has won back the Southern Colonies for the King, and for the King he'll hold them. The rebellion is in its dotage. What say you, Anne?" Without turning to Anne he picked up his glass and drained it.

Before Anne had time to answer a negro servant stepped into the room, and announced, "A gentleman to see Mr. Bradford, sah. He done guv no name."

John answered testily, "Let him wait or go — I'm at supper."

"He say he come on business, sah."

"Business?" cried John, rising hastily from the table. "Then show him into the parlour. Excuse me, major."

But he had not got half-way to the door, when in walked the gentleman in question. He was clad in very shabby finery of a dark colour, fringed with

much soiled lace. He wore a broad hat which, owing to his having neglected to remove it, and to the fact that he held his head bowed concealed most of his face.

John stared at the man in amazement, not quite certain whether to be very sweet with this gentleman on business, or very indignant at his intrusion. As the stranger did not seem inclined to speak first, John at last got out in extremely civil voice,

"Pray be seated, sir, and have a glass of wine. The business can wait, I am sure."

A chuckle broke out from under the hat; such a chuckle as made the old gentleman's scalp tingle. And the shabby gentleman shook all over as though he was enjoying a huge joke.

Nobody attempted conversation again, and least of all John Bradford. Anne and Temple had both swung around in their chairs to regard the stranger when he had given vent to this fiendish chuckle. Now all three were staring at him round-eyed, while the big negro servant was staring in the doorway round-mouthed.

"Who the devil are you?" John suddenly roared, his voice faltering in spite of himself.

The shabby gentleman slowly lifted his face to the light.

"Why, father, don't you know me?"

The old man started. "My God, Barnabas!"

"No, no, father, I'm not a god yet," Barnabas spoke in a strange high voice, and laughed in the same key. "But, damn it, you needn't all stare your damned heads off. Get to your seat there, old fatty."

Poor John jumped as though he had been stung by a bee. And such was the fearful aspect of his son he hastened, purple in the face, to get his seat at the table.

Anne sat rigid; the colour had left her face while Temple had the appearance of crouching in his chair and ready to spring. His eyes, fixed on Barnabas, fairly glowed with fire.

Barnabas, taking his eyes from his cringing father, turned them, with a great sneer on his face to gaze upon what he expected to be other cringing forms. But when his eyes met Temple's he had a considerable shock, and immediately turned his attention to the wine decanter. Perhaps he still remembered the smart of Temple's sword.

"Well, father, as you press me to stay a while I will." He drew up a chair and sat down and poured out a brimming glass of red wine. He was just about to drain it off, when evidently the silence troubled him. He suddenly put down the glass un

touched upon the table, and swung around in his chair. How he ever knew that three darky servants had been staring at him with wide-open eyes and awed faces it is hard to say. But turn he did, and that so suddenly as to rob the dark faces of all power of motion for very fear. With a fierce oath Barnabas whisked the decanter up from the table and sent it smash through the doorway. But the dark faces were there no more. After this outburst of temper he glanced at Temple, then turned towards his father, who sat staring in front of him as though the very skies had fallen and all light gone out.

"Come, come, business before pleasure always, you know," Barnabas said. "And here's my business." He drew a large, square envelope from an inside pocket, and laid it upon the table in front of him. "John E. Bradford, Esquire, Philadelphia," he read out.

At this John sat up and took notice.

"Yes, sir," Barnabas assured him, "it's addressed to you. See?" He held it up for the old man to see.

"Well, give it to me," said John weakly, and held out his hand for it.

"Now, here's where the business begins," Barnabas assured him. "It's from your Philadelphia

correspondent, and it contains valuable news for you."

"Well, give it to me, I tell you." John was forgetting his despair of a few moments before. "How did you ever get hold of it?"

"I got hold of it from your correspondent, whom I called on in Philadelphia. You know I've had a pretty tough time of it these three years since I left the army that day at Monmouth. I've been across the water to the Old World and couldn't get back, or else you'd have seen me before this. I landed in Philadelphia and hoped to find you there, and found this instead. Oh! but business, business! What do you offer me for this letter?"

"Offer you!" shouted John. "It's mine. Give it to me."

"Now wait, dear father, this is business. I'm not *giving* things away. This is worth — ah — let me see — two hundred pounds. Two hundred pounds, sir, and the letter's yours."

At these words the old gentleman fairly bounced up from the table, purple in the face. He slammed a fat fist down on the boards, spluttered but found no words, then turned about and betook himself out of the room.

No sooner had he gone and the door slammed behind him than Anne, still very pale, rose to follow

him. As she and Temple left the room, Barnabas filled his glass abrimming once again.

Anne seated herself near the open fire; Temple stood near her, staring into the flames; Mr. Bradford paced in feverish haste up and down the room. Nobody spoke. That Barnabas had come back, after they had thought for years that he had gone for ever, that he had come back without even his old show of good-will, was about too much for the old gentleman to bear. The terrible thing that clutched at their hearts was the hopelessness of the future. If he had returned to bully and rob them after these three years of absence, when might he not come again? They must buy him off each time. When would it end? With a groan the rich merchant sank into a chair.

"After all," Temple spoke up, turning to Mr. Bradford, "it's not as bad as we make it out to be. All you've got to do is to disinherit him. Give him something this time; show him clearly that you are disinheriting him by law, and that henceforth he will be treated like any other stranger if he annoys you ever again."

A negro servant opened the door, and before starting to speak, surveyed the room with a nervous glance. He felt quite reassured, however, when he saw that the awful gentleman was not there.

"Another gentleman to see Mr. Bradford, sah. He done guv the name of Major Wharton. He say he come on business, sah."

This announcement was magical in its effect upon the three silent people. Anne flushed slightly, and the sorrow fled from her face. Though she tried hard to conceal her emotion yet Temple perceived it all too clearly. The Englishman turned his attentions to the fire and started rearranging the burning lumps of coal with the brass tongs. And, as for John, such was his instinct for business that, in a trice, he had thrown aside his burden of sorrow and become the active business man. He got out of his chair and reached the door in time to welcome Major Wharton as he entered.

After many questions had been asked and answered, and many bits of news, good and bad, exchanged, while all four stood in the middle of the room, John said:

"But here we are all standing! Sit down, sit down. Here's a seat for you, David."

"Oh, no, thank you, Mr. Bradford, I haven't a minute to stay. I just came to say hullo to you all, and to arrange that bit of business with you of nearly four years' standing."

"Oh, there's no hurry about that," John explained, very evidently pleased. "I'd forgotten all

about it. Perhaps we had better step into the study for a moment."

But at this Major Temple assured them that he had important things to attend to himself, and told them not to leave on account of him. He shook hands cordially enough with David and left the room.

John cast a doubtful look towards Anne. "Well, I guess we can proceed here. We don't mind Anne now. She won't understand."

"Then," said David, "to make it short, 'tis this: Ruth got not only her health but a husband in the Barbadoes; a merchant there. Well, he chooses to consider the debt to you, Mr. Bradford, as his own, and has furnished me with the means to pay it."

"Ruth married! Oh, what good news!" cried Anne.

"Oh, I'm very glad to hear that, Davy," said John in a big comfortable voice; "that is, to hear of Ruth's marriage. Yes, it is very surprising indeed." Then spying the large, leather wallet which David had drawn from his pocket, he tried hard to rebutton the buttons of his waistcoat, repeating the while, "yes, very surprising, indeed, indeed."

"I have the full amount here, — two hundred pounds with the interest for them." David opened

the leather wallet. "Now, in paying you these, it is understood, I suppose, that I am released from the embargo you put me under?"

John had had one hand all ready to put forth to receive the notes, but at these words he withdrew it hastily into his trousers' pocket. For that embargo was a very valuable asset to John. It stood in his mind as representative of all his much-loved and valued possessions. Owing to it he felt assured that his daughter would marry on the "right" side of the disputants. The good gentleman considered Anne as a very precious bit of means to an end.

"Business is business, you know, David, even with those we love most. This is all I can promise you: if the allied armies in the South defeat Lord Cornwallis then the embargo is off."

John turned away and paced to the other end of the room with every show of satisfaction. When he paced back again he regarded Anne inquiringly, as though he expected to find that his words had a great effect on her. He had quite forgotten that his daughter knew nothing of what they were talking.

David remained impassive, although in his heart this hard man of weights and measures stung him to anger.

"When can we hope to know anything about it?" he asked.

"Any day, any day now. You know this long while Washington has been manœuvring to corner Cornwallis down there by Yorktown, and the French fleet helping him; well, it's my opinion, David, they'll do it, and soon too. I'll get word the instant any news arrives; my correspondent in Philadelphia sees to that."

David turned aside with a sickly grin. He knew that it would be hopeless to try and reason this merchant into surrendering any point of advantage which he possessed. He would have to wait, then, until the coming battle in the South should decide his fate. But he himself had to start South to join the forces the first thing next day, and the idea of leaving Anne for no knowing how long a time and riding off with this terrible uncertainty still with him, was too much. In spite of his better judgment he had to plead.

"But, Mr. Bradford, I have to leave here in a few minutes, for I ride South to-morrow — well — it seems to me only honest that if I can pay the debt, everything should be settled between us. I *must* say —"

But here Anne broke in. She had been busily examining the scarlet geraniums in the window at

the far end of the room until this moment, but now her curiosity got the better of her.

"What *does* all this mean?" she demanded. "It sounds too mysterious for anything."

David, of course, had no intention of answering, and he felt quite sure John would not either. But after a moment's pause John did answer.

"I suppose there's no reason why you shouldn't know," he said a little doubtfully. "I lent David a little money to send Ruth South for her health. Ruth's husband chooses to consider the debt his own and has sent David here to pay it."

"I never heard it; how strange." Anne thought for a moment. "And this embargo? You see I was listening all along. What is it that David wants you to release him from?"

"Come, come, Anne, you mustn't be too curious. You women have a license, I know, but you mustn't carry it too far!" Nevertheless John was very proud of his business deal and saw no harm in letting Anne into it. "If you must know, the embargo I put David under was that he would not marry you until I gave my consent. I lent the money under this precise condition." The merchant lifted a hand and brought his forefinger and thumb close together in front of a half-shut eye, as though he was taking aim through them.

Anne blushed and did not look at David. David blushed and did not look at Anne. The merchant continued:

"David has brought the money, with the interest due, — but whether I give my consent or not depends on affairs in the South, as I said."

"What has the South to do with us?" Anne asked.

"Not much to do with you people, but a whole lot to do with me. If the British win, why, I'm a Tory and so all safe; but if the rebels win, then off with the embargo, on with a rebel son-in-law, and John Bradford won't have to flee to England or Canada for protection. See what I mean?"

Anne did see what he meant and turned away. Just what would have ensued had not an interruption come at the moment there is no saying. For Anne and John were very natural people and did have their disputes. From Anne's manner as she turned away from him John read volumes. His temper was rising, and he was getting ready for one of his outbursts, when the door was flung open and Barnabas entered. Barnabas must have finished all the wine that was on the table, for already the wine effect was very marked.

"Well, what about it, old boss?" demanded the son as he again drew the letter from his pocket.

John did not speak.

"Take it, or leave it, then. None of your foolin' for me." Saying this, Barnabas stepped over to the open fire, and made as though to drop the letter into the flames.

"Wait," John snapped out. Barnabas paused; the letter ready to fall from his fingers. "Don't *you* want that letter, David?" John demanded. "That letter has the news you're looking for: it's sure to have. Buy the letter with the two hundred pounds you've got, and if Washington has won you're free to marry Anne to-morrow if you like. If he has lost you'll never marry her."

"Ho, ho!" cried Barnabas, straightening himself up and regarding John and David. "So you've kept the game going pretty cleverly: a son-in-law on the winning side. But I'm afraid if the British win you'll have to stir your old bones to make this minx marry Temple. Ha, ha!"

But John paid no attention to Barnabas; at least he thought he didn't, although his face flushed anew with anger.

"I'll pay two hundred pounds for the letter if the embargo will be off," David said.

But John Bradford was not to come out underneath in a business transaction.

"If Washington has won the embargo's off."

"It seems the young major hasn't much confidence in Washington," suggested Barnabas with a sneer.

"I'll take the letter," said David, "on this condition, that if it doesn't definitely state that Washington has won or lost, but leaves us none the wiser, the battle not having yet been fought, you pay half."

"Agreed. Hand over the letter, sir."

David gave two tightly bound packages of notes to Barnabas in exchange for the letter.

"Let me open it, David," cried Anne, running over to him.

It was with very marked relief that he surrendered it to her for, in spite of himself, David's hands shook as he held the letter up to open. And now he wondered at the calm way in which Anne drew a pin from her hair, inserted it in one corner of the envelope, and finally tore it open.

"Correct," said Barnabas as he finished counting the notes. He tucked them with great care into an inside pocket and buttoned up his coat. Then grinning with great relish at the others, he slapped his chest where it bulged with the money.

"Ah, that's the warm linin' to have. But hurry up with the news there, sister; I must be off. I

don't know which are the most anxious to shoot me, the English or the Yankees."

Anne unfolded the sheet and held it close to the lamp and read aloud:

"'Philadelphia, October 24, 1781.'"

"Why, 'tis but two days ago!" exclaimed John. "The messenger has made speed."

"'Dear Sir: As a messenger leaves at daylight who will be admitted to New York, I write this by candle that you may be among the first in that city to hear what news has just arrived and set the town wild. An hour ago, I mean a little after three of the clock at night, I was awakened by the clatter of a horse galloping in the street. It stopped near my door, that is, in front of Judge McKean's house, the President of the Congress. I heard a pounding on the judge's door, and the judge's voice from his bedroom window. I got out of bed and opened my own window, but what the horseman said I could not make out, though it excited the judge amazingly. It—'"

"Oh, God! why doesn't the old fool give us his news and be done with it!" Barnabas exclaimed.

"'It was heard by the watchman, who came up and talked with the rider, while the judge hastened down-stairs to open the door himself. And then,

what think you, the watchman set up the cry — ' " Anne turned the sheet over. " ' " Past three o'clock, and Cornwallis is taken! " It was indeed true. At Yorktown, in Virginia, on the 19th, another British army surrendered.' "

John Bradford stepped hastily across the room to David.

" Davy, my boy," he said, grasping his hand, " this is a great day for you; yes, sir, a great day for you. And you've got all my best wishes for the future, Davy. Be good to Anne."

So joyous was David that he chose to take the good gentleman at his face value. He expressed most sincere thanks for his kind words and squeezed his hand very warmly.

Barnabas, who had been silently looking on, broke out into a hearty and scornful laugh and started for the door. Then the small spark of good that lurked somewhere within him came to the surface. He turned suddenly about and held out his hand to Anne.

" Good-bye, little sister," he said.

Anne grasped his hand joyfully. Then, without glancing at the others, Barnabas Bradford left his father's house. The prodigal had returned, but had left still the prodigal; and it was to be many years ere they were to hear of him again: years

that, for the man that knew not enough to mend his ways, were steeped in grief and pain.

Soon after Barnabas had left, Major Temple entered. The great news was broken to him, and he again proved himself, even under this severe test.

"That means that *I* instead of *you* start South to-morrow," he said to David with a little smile as he shook him by the hand.

"No, I shall not have to go South now that Washington is victorious," David said; and he tried to keep the exultation out of his voice. "Washington has been very good to me."

"Ay, he has won the day for you, lad," put in John.

Then Anne, who had found nothing to say during this time, spoke to the Englishman, "George, when you come North again you will come and stay here at this very house, won't you?"

"Thanks, Anne, I shall the moment I am off duty," he assured her warmly.

Major Temple left the house soon afterwards on his errand of war, and John Bradford rode with him part way through the town, but finally dropped off at a friend's house to break to him the news of the rebel victory.

THE END.

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